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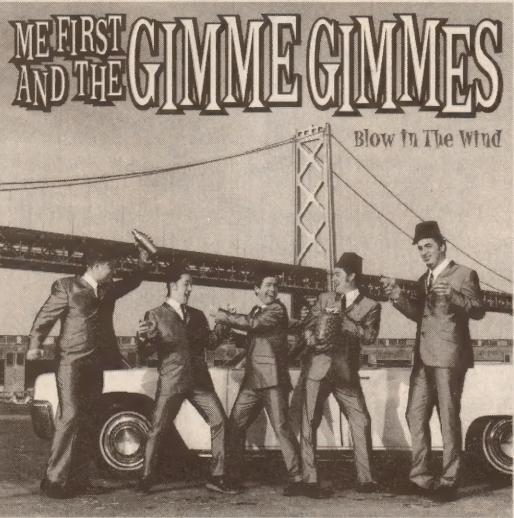
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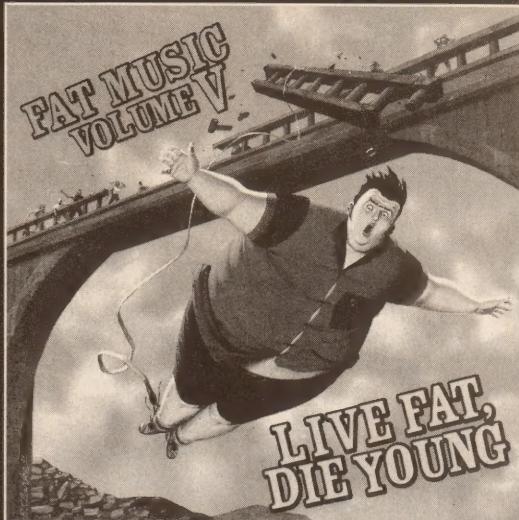
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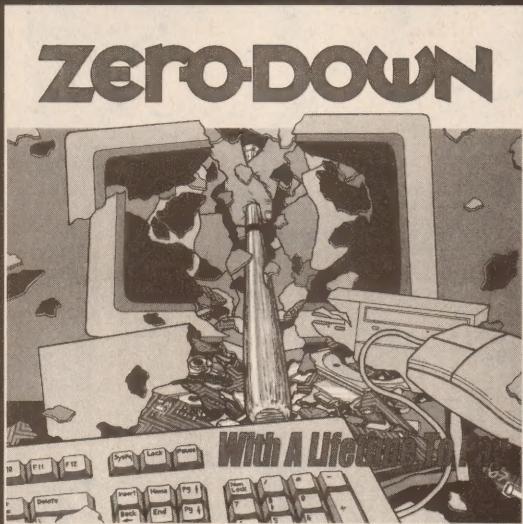
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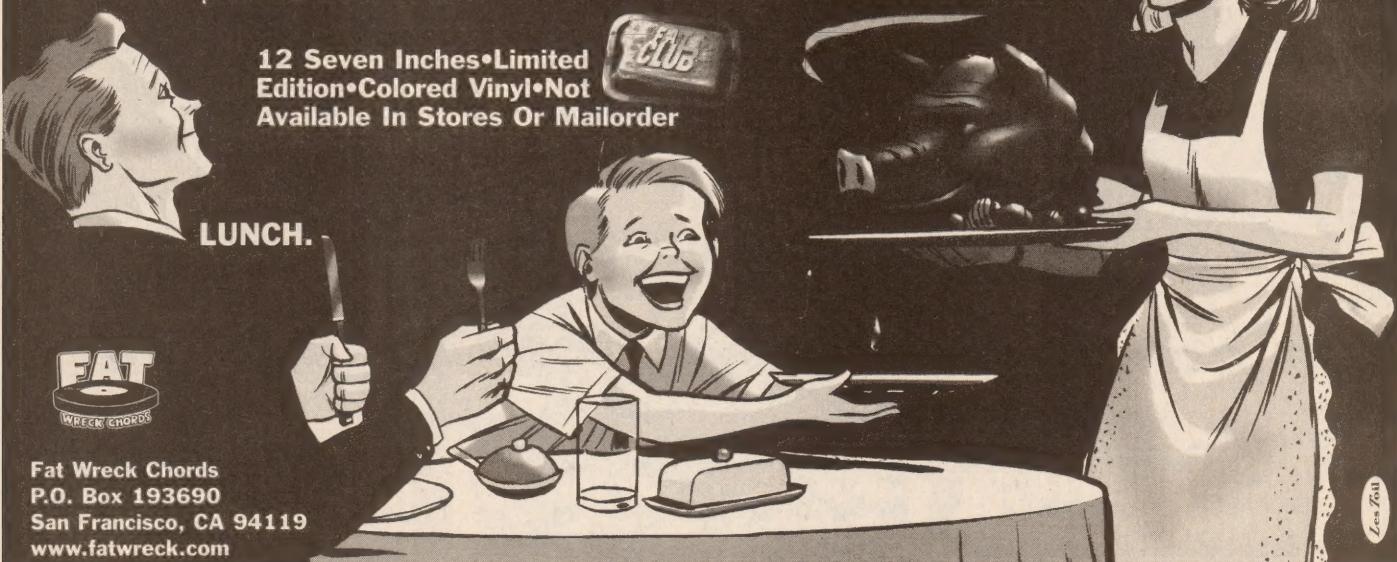
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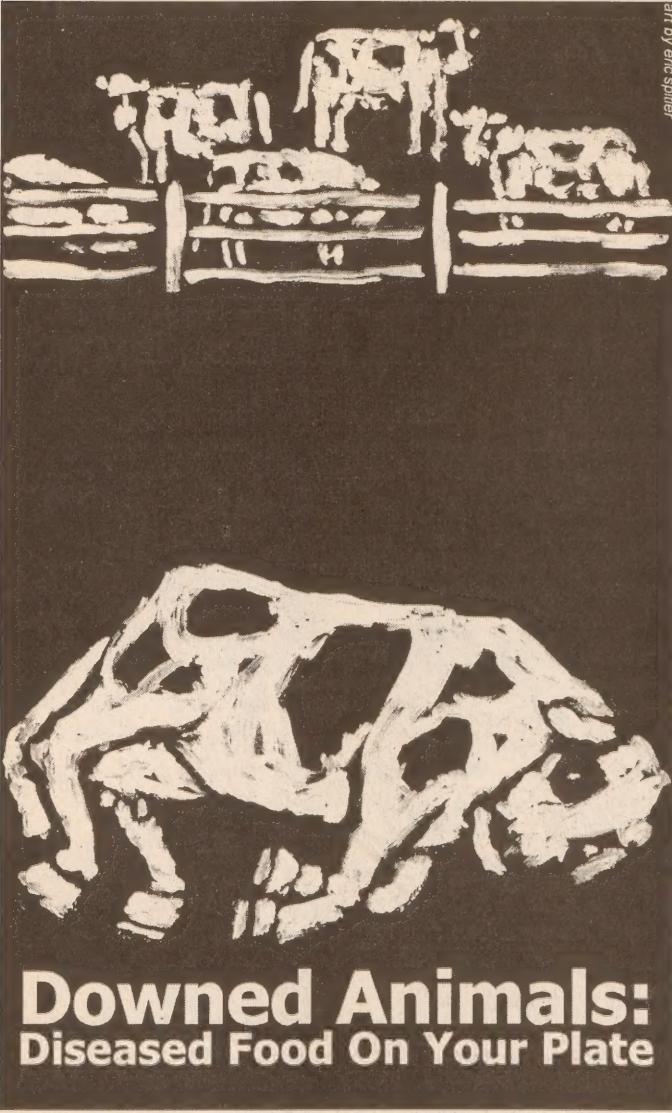
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Downed Animals: Diseased Food On Your Plate

by Gene Bauston

Across the U.S., downed animals, animals too sick or weak to even stand, are marketed and slaughtered for human food. They suffer horribly at stockyards and slaughterhouses, and their use in the human food chain poses a threat to human health. • PAGE 28

"Only after the last tree has been cut down. Only after the last river has been poisoned. Only after the last fish has been caught. Only then will you find that money cannot be eaten."

"When we realize we can make a buck cleaning up the environment, it will be done!"

"Education is a weapon, whose effect depends on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed." -- Joseph Stalin

Art by Eric Spiller

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-- Cree Indian Prophecy

-- Dennis Weaver

IMPACT press

covering issues the way the media should

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A Fact from IMPACT: The average American uses eight times as much fuel energy as an average person anywhere else in the world.

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education." - Thomas Jefferson

From The Editor



THE ACTIVIST MOVEMENT is a fragmented bunch. With so many goals, the message is often watered down or spread too thin. It's a real shame, because if we activists could pull together, we'd be a much stronger bunch. The problem is that many movements fail to recognize or incorporate other messages within their own endeavors.

I have a few examples of this problem that should help put this in perspective. I realize that someone fighting for corporate welfare reform may very well not see the point behind the animal rights movement. But there are several ways that messages could be combined to have a greater effect or avoid having a negative effect.

In late February, I attended a fantastic Animal Rights conference. The conference had speakers from Farm Sanctuary (article on page 28 by one of the founders), the Humane Society, PETA and more. However, the event, while commendably serving only Vegan food, used some styrofoam. I realize that cost is always an issue when putting together an event, especially one as affordable as this one. But a bad message is sent when animal rights and vegetarian/Vegan activists allow environmentally detrimental products to become a part of their message. I know this was unintentional, but it needs to be given more thought.

Relatedly, a friend of mine told me of the same problem with Food Not Bombs in San Francisco. They, too, have been known to use styrofoam when serving the less fortunate. Of course, money is a big issue for them. So, again, I understand the situation they are confronted with. But sometimes I wonder if groups fail to consider these other important issues when focusing on their own agendas. It's essential that they be combined.

A couple of years ago, I participated in a Reclaim the Streets rally in New York City. After an eventful day of protesting corporate dominance and the World Trade Organization, among other things, a large group of us marched to a police precinct where those arrested had been transported. On the way, one of the more vocal leaders of the rally decided he was thirsty. He popped into a pizza joint and bought a Coke. What a freakin' idiot! It blew my mind. Here we are risking arrest to get across the point that mega-corporations are evil and this numbskull goes and supports one of the worst.

My final example is reflected in PETA's "Shopping Guide to Nonleather Products." While this is a great reference for companies that have nonleather goods, it fails to address some important issues. The first four pages are great, featuring listings of Vegan-only companies. However, the remaining 12 or so pages include companies that sell leather alternatives besides their animal-based goods. Included in the list is Nike, one of the most despicable corporations around, a well-known user of overseas sweatshops to produce their goods. While PETA does acknowledge, in the back of the guide, that "inclusion in this guide does not imply endorsement," I wish they had avoided listing any company as obviously evil as Nike.

So where does this lead me? Well, first of all, try to combine the many important issues facing the world when you spend your money, attend protests and participate in activist activities. The environment, cruel business practices and a healthy, humane diet are all things we should consider on a daily basis. Obviously, doing something is better than doing nothing and I don't expect every activist to embrace all of these things. But I think that the activist movement, as a whole, could stand to incorporate some of these important issues in the way they approach their own agendas, or at least give them greater consideration. ■



• craig mazer •

Speak Your Mind. . .

Please proof your letters. IMPACT will try to decipher them. However, help us avoid having to do extra work. ALSO - keep your letters under 400 words. Thanks!

IMPACT:

While I agree that Novartis can be criminal, I found your article ("Have You Had Your Ritalin Today" by Gemma Hughes, Issue #30) irresponsible to those of us who have seen that there is no myth to hide except side effects and overdiagnosis, perhaps sponsored by Novartis. It's simple to search the web for red ink to dip your pen in, but you'll find nothing to controvert the biological evidence. Those who are afflicted by Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, whether it should rightly be called a disorder or not, exhibit a medical condition commonly described as "reverse reactions." This medical condition describes the inverted effect of certain stimulant and depressant pharmaceuticals when taken by an individual with decreased electrical activity in the frontal lobe of the brain, specifically an ADHD individual. When attempting to fall asleep using an over-the-counter sleep pill after a late night study session in college, I learned how they would instead make me utterly unable to stop fidgeting and sleep. Fidgeting is likewise a biological sign of ADHD and other disorders, something to be taken seriously in excess, not treated as a sign of ordinary childhood. You would think any responsible parent would know this.

Other reasonable methods of diagnosis include computer testing. There is a tell-tale test for ADHD which involves sitting in front of a computer screen for half an hour and hitting the spacebar every time a certain character appears on the screen, but not other when other characters appear. There is a distinct difference in the results between the ADHD test taker and those without enough sleep.

The article's author quotes a Dr. Breggin, "Does a drug become safe simply because it is prescribed by a doctor? Does 'pushing' drugs on children become legitimate simply because it is done by drug manufacturers?" I would ask, "Is it safe to prescribe morphine simply because one almost died in an accident?" No, it is never safe to prescribe drugs, but under the watchful eyes of a responsible and educated physician, it is an acceptable risk. Several tens of thousands of Americans die per year from widely accepted, over-the-counter drugs like aspirin.

Likewise, Ritalin has significant side effects which Novartis wouldn't like to point out. That is why I chose to stop taking it despite my increased grades after I was diagnosed with ADHD in high school. However, Ritalin and Dexedrine are useful tools for a short period of life only when prescribed by an expert and when side effects don't prove significant.

Colin Lee, Gainesville, Florida

IMPACT:

Most of your articles are right on the mark, especially "American Wages" by Patrick Scott Barnes under the column Mind Power (Issue #31). He is correct in the reason people aren't spending: low wages. It is not getting better. Wasn't it one of Hitler's aids that once said, "If you tell people enough times they will believe anything"?

This in regard to the economy being good for so long. What a myth, period. Real wages are less than twenty five years ago. What good is it for so many to go to college and come out lucky to make six bucks an hour? Paper mills to keep people in debt to the system.

Also good was the article on corporate welfare (also, Issue #31). We need to wake up now. There needs to be a grassroots effort to change the status quo. Otherwise we will end up a feudal system at best. We aren't a democracy but a capitalistic society. Big difference between the two.

William C. Shoop

P.S. — On one of Michael Moore's shows he lets us know Manpower Temps is the number one employer of people in America. That's scary. The rich get rich off the backs of the poor.

IMPACT:

You know what? I thought I was crazy, but you speak my words ("Block-Busted", Issue #31) and have my same thoughts. Is it me or is this whole freakin' world BRAINWASHED?! What is wrong with people - are they stupid or what? Listen, I have been on the wrong side since birth. I never wear what MTV tells me to, or what I see in all the fashion mags. I don't eat meat. I am mmeeeeeee! Sometimes it feels bad to be "on the outside looking in", but I feel what I am looking in on is a world full of idiots that will listen to anyone and pay enormous money for something just because the commercials told them that they would be popular if they bought it. I say, wake up America. Get your head out of the media's ass and start making your own decisions. Think for yourself and stop spending all your backbreaking money to make some corporate Nazi rich!

Thanks for letting me share,
Prophet of Doom AKA SC

IMPACT:

Cuba is nothing short of a success story considering the unrelenting fist of American democracy that has hammered into Castro's rule. Cuba's National Health is unparalleled and offers a striking contrast to the UK's NHS. Here the health service is falling apart at its very roots

and privatization has been handled shambolically. So far it has desperately courted the US, bowing to the whims and charms of Clinton.

With Hong Kong freshly dissolved within the PRC, the UK is one of the many vultures gathering to capitalize on the vast labour resources. Exploitation with the government seal; more multi-nationals will follow in the footsteps of the shoe manufacturers.

Under similarly communist rule, Cuba and China are poles apart. The human rights abuses of China, notably the crack down on the Falun Gong, a not so ancient movement, are self-perpetuating. The Falun Gong demonstrate peacefully and even quietly, yet they antagonize and disrupt the control of the state through their unorthodox practice of a martial art. Unlike Cuba, uprisings are not a result of a wish for material success, but equality, that which Cuba has supposedly attained.

With the US wishing to further stamp out Communism, they should look to Taiwan. This 'tiger economy' is now a world leader and amongst the first to divert investment in China. This at a cost to the national economic health, yet rather than then the streets running red with Taiwanese blood as promised by China should Taiwan ever declare independence. Here is a newly formed democracy struggling without any international support, particularly that of the US which it seeks. Undermined by the KMT the Democratic Political Party has watched helplessly as the US serenades China, refusing to build on the support briefly indicated in the missile crisis.

Here is the democracy with which to influence Asia. Here is a well funded and economically secure nation with which to establish committed ties. China is a several-headed beast with eyes looking in every direction; many are focused on Taiwan. The US should affirm its beliefs and stop confusing the economic and military might of the PRC. China and the US are without doubt the world's biggest bullies and the basis for democracy that the coupling of the two would create would leave many other nations out of pocket. The US is the self-styled world super power. Consequently it must focus its attentions outside of the national boundaries. It is a responsibility it has 'achieved' whether wanted or not.

If the US wishes to progress it should not neglect its closest neighbours, geographically or politically. The power and magnetism of the US and the West should be used to lure China rather than the other way around.

Gary Stanyard
United Kingdom

FIGURE FOUR

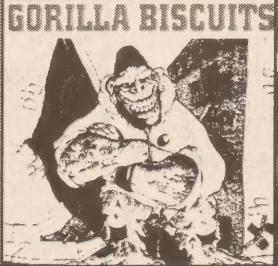
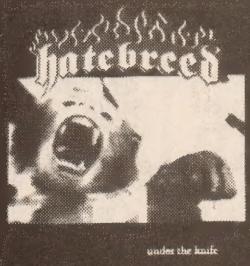


"when it's all said and done"

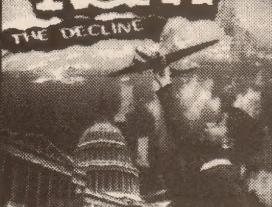
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Notes from the Cultural Wasteland

morris sullivan
morris sullivan



I write freelance for a lot of different people, and I spend about half my career hours as a journalist. And I'm a little miffed about something. I think I might be the only journalist in America that hasn't been assigned a story that has something to do with Dale Earnhardt. I'm going to rectify that right now. In truth, I could give a shit about auto racing and/or any of its drivers. I have discovered an important rule of journalism, however, and his tragic death makes a great example:

The importance of a news story is directly proportional to the frequency of its reporting, and the frequency of its reporting has nothing to do with the importance of the event itself.

Unless you live under a rock and only come out once every two months to go to the punk record store for a couple of CDs, you know who Earnhardt was. Even were that the case, you'd probably figure it out soon enough, because by now Jello Biafra¹ has probably staged a comeback with a new band called the Dead Earnharts².

A high percentage of you probably had never heard of him before his recent death; Earnhart was not a particularly important man. He didn't make the stock market go up and down, didn't find a cure for redneck ignorance; and didn't invent a car that could run on the hot air emitted by bloated politicians. He just drove really, really fast in a circle for a long time, usually faster than the other drivers. That's all.

Aside from his family and other loved ones, his death should have had little affect on anyone. As much as they'd like to think otherwise, his fans will still go to the races, and will no doubt find some other fast driver to worship. His existence had little effect on human culture, and his death should have passed quietly.

Notice I say, "should." Had he won the race, gone home, and died from a heart attack, his death would probably have caused hardly a ripple. However, his death is BIG NEWS because it happened in front of hundreds of thousands of people—and cameras.

I think perhaps the basest human desire is that which makes us slow down as we pass accidents on the highway and crane our necks to see if there's any blood on the road. Auto racing caters to that desire; many fans will admit that the accidents are the best part of the race.³ Therefore, a gruesome racing accident is about the only thing that makes better TV news copy than naked women⁴.

The day after the race, TV news showed that accident an average of once every five minutes during the shows' teasers and once every five seconds during the shows themselves. At this writing, one month later, they still manage to show it at least once every couple of nights.

In the meantime, our so-called President has managed to offend a Nobel Peace Prize-winning Korean by blowing off a chance to negotiate with North Korea, the Palm Beach Post has determined that Gore won the election, and we seem headed back to a cold war. However, these are less important stories, because while the events will affect each of us, they're less interesting to watch than a flaming car with a man inside flying through the air.

But here's where the story does become important: the event itself means almost nothing, but the media coverage has created a situation that threatens our freedom. Because of the intensive repetition of the gruesome scene, journalists are about to have a part of our first amendment rights yanked from us. Ultimately the blame for that, ironically, will fall on the head of a newspaper.

See, a newspaper could run a photo of the accident once or twice. However, the paper can't run it on every page, which would equate to the televised coverage, and it would look really stupid for the paper to run the same photo every day for weeks, like television news did the video clip. Therefore, in order to keep the story alive in some way, a Florida newspaper has asked to see the autopsy photos.

Earnhardt's widow doesn't want that. I don't blame her⁵. The paper says they don't want to publish them; they just want someone to look at them, to see if there should have been an "investigation." She probably didn't believe that—most people who have had much contact with reporters don't trust them. My best guess is that the paper wants to keep the story alive by writing descriptions of autopsy photos, which will appeal to the sordid interests of their readers almost as much as that two-second footage of the car crash.

The controversy over the photos has catalyzed the writing of a bill that, by the time you read this, will have gone before the Florida legislature, and perhaps become a law. [Editor's Note: The law has been signed and put into effect.] The bill will restrict access to

(INFO, continued on page 51)

¹Strangely, my spellchecker doesn't recognize "Biafra" as a word, but does recognize "biasfree," "barf" and "beaver," which should tell you something about Microsoft.

²A reference to an '80s hardcore punk band, Dead Kennedys. Another equally witty parallel would refer to the '80s California band, MDC, or Millions of Dead Cops. Millions of Dead Earnharts would work very well, I think. I thought of it first, and claim 10% of your royalties if you steal it from me.

³I happen to know this, because I live not far from Daytona, and have met some fans. I even went to the races once, and about the only excitement during the hours and hours of watching cars go in a circle is the occasional

accident and the millisecond during which someone crosses the finish line first. Otherwise, it has a lot in common with sitting in the front yard drinking beer and watching the grass grow.

⁴Bike Week contributed another over-reported news story recently, this one about scantily-clad women wrestling in a bed of coleslaw.

⁵I don't trust them, either. I've been on the other end of a reporter's legal pad often enough to know this: there's a device they use, where they act "buddy-buddy" to you, then use what you give them to smear you. I imagine that's probably happened to someone in the Earnhardt family at least once, and she's wise to be cautious.

Zack

"A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

-- The Second Amendment

I wasn't there that night. I heard about it the next day. My friend, Zack, was dead.

From the bits and pieces I was told, this is what I gathered had happened: Zack was seeing another man's woman. Nellie, the woman, claimed she was getting ready to dump her boyfriend. Paul, the boyfriend, knew Zack was seeing his woman.

So, one night, Paul came to his girlfriend's apartment with a gun. Zack was there. An argument had started. For some reason, Paul ran outside. Zack ran after him. Paul went to a pay phone and dialed 911.

"Somebody's coming to get me."

To give you a visual, Zack towered over six feet tall and weighed over two hundred pounds. Paul was a short guy. Zack caught up. He took off his shirt.

"Here I go! Here I go!" Paul pulled the trigger. I don't know how many times he did it, but I do know this: he killed Zack.

The Justice System found Paul guilty of manslaughter. In other words, he didn't intend to kill Zack.

I was enraged at this. The very fact that this guy came to the apartment with a gun was enough to prove he had intended to kill someone.

Paul was given probation.

This didn't have to happen, especially over a woman who eventually went back to Paul after Zack's death.

The gun had no business being on the scene. It should've been left at home.

I understand mandatory waiting periods. To prevent a hot head from killing someone, he has to wait until his background check has been cleared before he can purchase a gun.

Paul may have gone through a background check; or the gun could have been illegal. Regardless, it had no business being on the scene.

According to a survey by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. "has the highest overall firearm rate, a high proportion of homicides that are the result of a firearm injury, and the highest proportion of suicides that result from firearm injury."

As I researched for this article, I found these facts online:

More people are killed in one day in America by gun homicides than in one entire year in Japan.

In one week, more folks are killed by guns in the US than in all of Western Europe over one year.

In George Dubya Bush Land, Texas, 68 million guns are owned. Texas' population is 17 million. That's four guns to every woman,

man and child living in Texas.

There are 10 times more licensed gun dealers in the US than there are McDonald's restaurant. That's 142,000 gun dealers compared to 12,000 McDonald's restaurants.

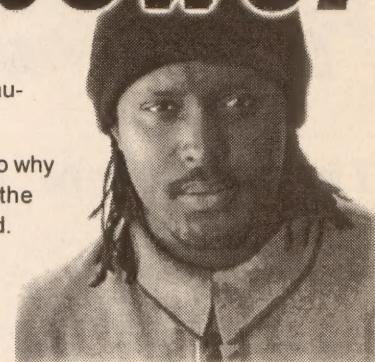
This last fact may give juice to why white males predominate the 'Shooting Up Schools' trend. Whites are more likely to carry guns than blacks. Yep, white folks are more likely to carry a Nine-Millimeter than black folks.

I used to think my relatives were being racist when they said white folks love guns. Now, I see truth in it.

Americans need to do something about gun violence. Hiding behind the Second Amendment won't do it.

Contrary to popular belief, the Second Amendment does not give a person the right to bear arms. The amendment was referring to this right regarding "a well-regulated militia." This was a clause that allowed said "militia" to protect themselves from the new, federally-formed military if such a situation arose. These "militia"

mind power



by patrick scott barnes

More people are killed in one day in America by gun homicides than in one entire year in Japan.



were viewed as a counterbalance to the federal army. Obviously, you could understand the underlying fear of government military given their escape from the grasps of the British armies.

The National Rifle Association, a heavy contributor to Republicans, have been twisting this truth for years. They claim the Second Amendment does give a citizen the right to bear arms. They claim that "militia" was simply another word for the general population. However, the "militia" of that time, something each state had, was comprised of able-bodied white males approximately 18-45. That is definitely not the general population. And today's situation is far-removed from the citizen-militia of the 18th Century.

The NRA's claim pissed off Former Chief Justice Warren Burger, a gun-owning Republican. In 1991, he said the NRA was deceiving folks about the Second Amendment. He commented that "[the NRA] ha(s) misled the American people." He went on to write, "The very language of the Second Amendment refutes any argument that it was intended to guarantee every citizen an unfettered right to any kind of weapon."

Fraud or not, I know one thing. A gun was involved in killing my homeboy. That's why I don't own one to this day. KK

The Death of Decency

by Tor Hyams

art by Marty Kelley

Listen, I can't really stay that long so I'm not going to even sit down. You can have my chair. Really, I have things to do and, although I would like to chat, I simply can't right now. I really gotta go. But, before I do...

What the hell is this fascination we Americans have with watching other people get cut open? Sure, I know it's all about the rubbernecking principle, but, still...icky...feh... Somehow it's exciting to see other people's blood and guts. But, isn't it deeper than that? What we really like is to see other people hurt. If you don't believe me, just go see any action movie.

Although I'm not one of those moral "let's ban violent lyrics" types, I must say I'm pretty sick of being force-fed gore. Doesn't anyone have anything better to do than watch other people in pain? Imagine if it were your mother! How would you feel about it then? And what the hell is wrong with these people who volunteer to broadcast their mangled hearts all over the damn web? What if they died? CNN would surely cover the story as the first person courageous enough to die online (hey, isn't that what we at Fierce do every day?). But, seriously folks, what would the interview process be like.

Doctor: Ma'am, I'm sorry to say, but if we don't perform quadruple bypass surgery tonight, you will be dead by the morning.

Patient: Oh my GOD! I'm going to die!?

Doctor: No, ma'am not if we perform the surgery you won't.

Patient: I understand, doctor. If that's the only alternative, let's do it.

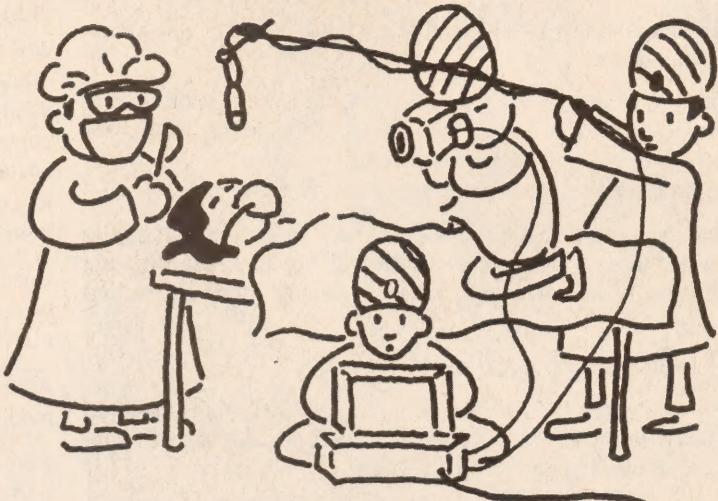
Doctor: I'm glad you feel that way, but before we get started I wondered if I could introduce you to my colleagues on the web. They would really like to broadcast the operation live on line.

Patient: But, doctor, what are you saying??? I'm scared.

Doctor: Don't worry, ma'am, the web can't hurt you. At least, meet them. Please, I'll bring you a steak and a cheese sandwich...

Patient: Uh...ok, but isn't meat and cheese bad for my heart?

Doctor: Well, yeah...duh. But,



we'll clean all that out when we open you up. Might as well live it up while you can. How about a little coffee Häagen Dazs with that?...Come on in gentlemen.

Computer Tech: Helloooooo. My name is Sabir Saijhid. I am the webmaster for American Health Online Open Heart Live Channel. We are very excited to be filming your surgery tonight. Thank you berry berry much.

Patient: Channel??? Webmaster???

CUT TO LATER THAT NIGHT

Doctor: Scalpel...

Sabir Saijhid: I'm berry berry sorry doctor, but there is a problem with our T1 line. Could we please delay the operation for an hour or so?

Doctor: But if I don't start now, she might not make it.

Sabir Saijhid: Doctor, do I have to remind you that Microsoft has invested millions of dollars in your hospital open heart program?

Doctor: Ho, ho, ho...Sabir, buddy....I was just kidding! Sure, take your time.

There it is. Do you think this stuff doesn't actually happen? Is that what you think? Do you think that just because we're in the nuclear winter of the dot com era we all won't all fall prey to the back stabbing schemes of our young Hindu entrepreneur friends? Well, think again. And, while you're at it, stop eating so much damn cholesterol. Remember, no one in the world is as obese as us Americans. Gotta go! ▀



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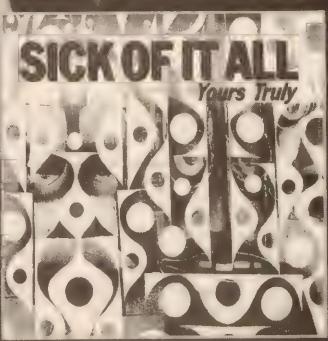
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Don Pflaster



Allegiance

There's a lot of healthy cynicism out there about our political leaders. I'm proud to be a part of it, because it is well-placed cynicism. I overheard plenty of people in the past election relaying thoughts such as, "Looks like a contest between tweedledee and tweedledum this year. Yup." Self-proclaimed realists that they are, they went ahead and voted for one of them anyway. At least they understood that what they were voting for were fetid feces of assorted rodent species. Hey, that rhymes.

We should all have that universal wisdom locked firmly in place. It's easy to have when one realizes that people excel in politics because they are skilled at the art of securing and maintaining power. It's their job, their course of study, their lifelong ambition. They undoubtedly have other reasons for being in that profession, but those are merely peripheral without the central drive that involves governing and popularity. They are participants in what is arguably the largest system of organized bribery ever to exist. So they've got priorities, and doing the work of constituents is seldom paramount to political self-preservation.

I'll be fair and admit that it's a sweeping generalization, and I know that people vote more in line with the tenets of their personal belief system than with any given person's winning smile or shining personality. Anyone who doesn't is really, really confused or just doesn't care.

But the expectation of an average politician to be prudent and wise, or to have interpersonal ethics, or to have genuine, believable honesty is pretty much a joke. And we do talk about it consistently on our talk shows, often using the skeptical term "spin," which just proves that even our greatest political analysts don't trust the subjects they analyze any further than Mini-Me could

throw a Winnebago.

Why then, knowing all this, do so many of us still allow our truths to be so incredibly skewed by our party affiliations that we automatically attack or defend our individual leaders with blatant disregard for the painfully obvious?

Former President Clinton so obviously broke the law by lying under oath about his tempestuous love affair with a government clerk, but there were so many Democrats who flocked to his side in throngs to protect him against the charges. Why? Is Clinton really that much of an incredible human being to warrant such a defense? He embarrassed the Democratic Party, for crissakes. But instead of condemning him, most of his Democrat brethren expressed their blind allegiance to him by embarrassing themselves alongside him. And at the subsequent State of the Union address, they gave him standing ovations every twenty seconds.

Let's face it, President Bush is not an articulate, intellectual heavyweight. You don't have to watch him for more than a minute to see the incredibly obvious shortcomings of his communication skills. How he ever made it this far in politics is mind-boggling, but again – it probably has much to do with this weird phenomenon of partisan garrisoning which has defended his personality and exaggerated his accomplishments, apparently enough to offset his clumsy, weak, bumbling drivel that sadly passes for speech.

And when Gore and Bush were locked in the election tie, how many Democrats marched under the banner of Bush's victory, claiming that the machine count was the real count? And how

Why do so many Republican leaders automatically dismiss any concerns raised by environmental watchdog groups? Is our continued existence as a species really that less important than making a buck?

many Republicans rushed to aid the plight of Gore, to make sure all the votes were counted accurately?

Why do so many Republican leaders automatically dismiss any concerns raised by environmental watchdog groups? Is our continued existence as a species really that less important than making a buck? I mean, yeah, there are some real wackos out there like the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) who will burn down warehouses and factories to save nature, but many other pro-environment organizations are legitimate and compelling, and we have a great deal to learn from them.

What is it in the mind of the major party supporter that passes for right and wrong? Do partisan followers have these concepts of



art by eachean

justice rigidly fixed in their minds? Do they have a set of beliefs? Do they analyze every situation based on truth and contemplative reflection? Or are the things they believe in completely tentative, subject to repeal if someone with whom they are aligned politically suddenly rushes headlong against those beliefs?

Bitter bickering between the parties is empty and hollow, and moral absolutism is a distraction from finding solutions to the real plights of starvation, poverty, corruption, the drug war, and so on. To have real consistency in personal ethics, it becomes necessary to separate one's self from one's governmental representatives. Though they may voice some of your personal politics to the highest chamber of your country, they are by no means your friends or your clique, and you don't need to follow them off of cliffs when they screw up. **KK**

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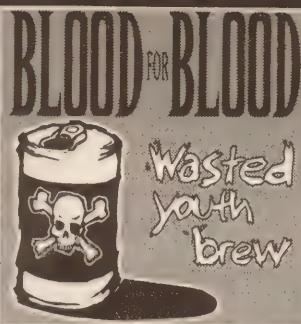
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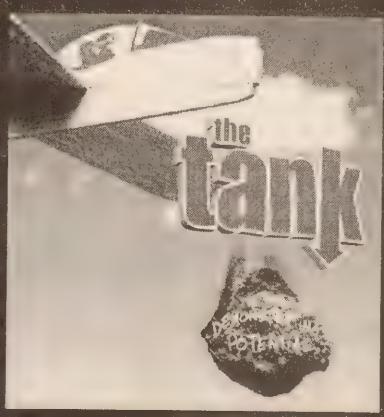


JOSHUA
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Was it the Falun Gong?

The Fires This Time: Immolation or Deception in Beijing?

By Danny Schechter

WHAT COULD BE MORE DRAMATIC? People are setting themselves on fire in Tiananmen Square in the heart of Beijing. CNN is there. The police just happen to have fire extinguishers on hand, and the victims are rushed to a hospital after their agonies are thoroughly photographed for state television. While the government-controlled media uncharacteristically releases the story at once, it takes a week of production before video footage is aired.

Soon, horrific images are rocketed around the world, seeming to confirm China's charges that an evil cult is ordering brainwashed members to commit suicide. Citing this new "evidence," the government insists that what it has been saying all along about those "fanatical" Falun Gongers is true, and that these people must be banned as a threat to themselves and the nation. On February 16, another suicide is attributed to Falun Gong. Alongside a charred body, an uncharred note is found allegedly claiming the victim did it to support Master Li Hongzhi's spiritual practice.

The Wall Street Journal's Ian Johnson, one of the most insightful journalists following this story, had his suspicions aroused by the speed with which this story was covered. He observed that the state media "reported [the victim's] death with unusual alacrity, implying that either the death took place earlier than reported or the usually cautious media had top-level approval to rush out electronic reports and a televised dispatch. The 7 p.m. local news, for example, had a filmed report from Mr. Tan's hometown of Changde, a small city in Hunan province. Most reports for the evening news are vetted by noon, so the daily broadcast rarely carries reports from the same day, let alone an event that happened at noon and involved satellite feeds from relatively remote parts of the country."

For media consumers and readers of news, perception often trumps unclear realities. In a world where dramatic images overshadow complex issues, Falun Gong stands convicted of crazed cult behavior. Case closed!

Score a big one for Chinese President Jiang Zemin's crusade to "crush" and discredit a growing spiritual movement that continues to resist a state-ordered ban despite the detention of an estimated 50,000 practitioners and over a hundred dead in police custody. Already, on the strength of this one incident, *The Financial Times* (an international news and analysis newspaper) proclaimed a "winner," as in, "Beijing Wins Propaganda War Against Falun Gong." Note the headline. It doesn't refer merely to one skirmish in a protracted media war that has gone on for 19 months, but to the war itself.

Many other respected news organizations disseminated the same story the same way even though they were unable to verify it independently, instead using accounts from Communist Party-con-

trolled state media, particularly the Xinhua news agency. Now, as new questions are raised and doubts are expressed, it may turn out that the world media has been misled into becoming an uncritical transmission belt for Beijing's bullying.

Firing Line

The first incident happened on January 23, days after Jiang intensified his official, nationwide, anti-cult media campaign. CNN was in the Square and reported on the suicides but their tapes were confiscated, and thus never aired. Seven days later, China's official TV shocked the nation with footage of five people engulfed in flames, pictures said to be from nearby surveillance cameras. Now a tragically disfigured victim of the incident, 12-year-old Liu Siying, says that her own mother told her to set herself on fire to reach the "heavenly golden kingdom" in some accounts, or "nirvana" in others. She has become a sympathetic symbol, even a poster child for alleged abuses by the "evil cult." Her image is everywhere; her tragedy has outraged all of China. (In this respect she is the Elian Gonzalez of China!) Yet only approved media outlets have been permitted access to her. Western reporters have been barred from direct contact.

Was she a Falun Gong practitioner? That seems doubtful, after The Washington Post's Phillip Pan traced her to her home in Kaifeng (a town that experienced an even more tragic disco fire recently, killing hundreds and scarring many others). Pan discovered that the young girl's mother, who died in the Tiananmen fire, was not known locally as a practitioner, but was depressed, mentally unstable and accused of beating her daughter and mother.

Significantly, one of the CNN producers on the scene, just 50 feet away, says she did not even see a child there. The government says doctors performed a tracheotomy on the victim, but a pediatric surgeon said that, if that were true, the child wouldn't be speaking right away.

Falun Gong spokespeople have been quoted as denying that they ordered, orchestrated or participated in this incident. But in their statement, which has not been carried in full anywhere, they go further and indict the Western press: "It is troubling to us that the party line from the PRC [People's Republic of China] mouthpieces, Xinhua News Agency and CCTV, is being given so much airtime and so much credibility by the foreign press. Xinhua and other state-run media outlets are generally never considered credible sources, as even they openly admit that their function is to disseminate propaganda for the Chinese regime. In fact, Xinhua is the party line."

"There is so much that remains unclear and unknown about the



circumstances surrounding the incident. And no one knows what occurred in the week after the actual event and before the Chinese media outlets finally released their fully engineered news articles and television programs. We must remember that the Chinese regime is so tightly controlling every aspect of this case that none of Xinhua's claims have been corroborated by independent sources."

And why would Falun Gong deny its role in the incident if it was a protest? The Longhai Foundation, which monitors Chinese prisoners, had similar questions in the National Review: "Was this event staged or allowed to happen by China's government in order to discredit the Falun Gong? It is hardly a farfetched hypothesis. China's government has promised to extinguish all problems connected with the Falun Gong in advance of the 80th anniversary of Chinese Communism, which Beijing plans on celebrating this July. ... Justin Yu, a journalist for World Journal, the Chinese-language daily, reflected on the confusion faced by many Chinese over what to believe. The PRC's propaganda coup against the Falun Gong relies upon people's understanding of events in recent Asian history, such as the 73-year-old Buddhist monk in Saigon whose self-immolation was a form of protest to fulfill his beliefs, [like] Koreans cutting off their fingers and the Japanese ritual of hari-kari. But this situation is not clear. Who do we believe - the Communists? They have lied to us so many times, another lie for them is nothing."

I asked Beatrice Turpin, who covered Falun Gong in China for Associated Press TV and wrote about her experiences for

MediaChannel, what her suspicion was. She responded from her home in Thailand: "There was a big brouhaha with Falun Gong protests and footage of police beating practitioners last Chinese New Year and it would certainly fit in with typical China strategy to stage an event this year and make the show their own."

Grounds for Skepticism

Falun Gong practitioners initially told me their suspicions were aroused for four reasons:

1. The people in the Square, said to be long-time practitioners, didn't do the Falun Gong exercises correctly;
2. Authorities did not show any pictures of Falun Gong signs or books (which prohibit suicide) that protesters usually bring with them into the Square;
3. A school one of the victims was said to have graduated from was in fact closed at the time; and
4. There is no concept of "nirvana" in their beliefs.

These are perhaps small details, but they may be telling.

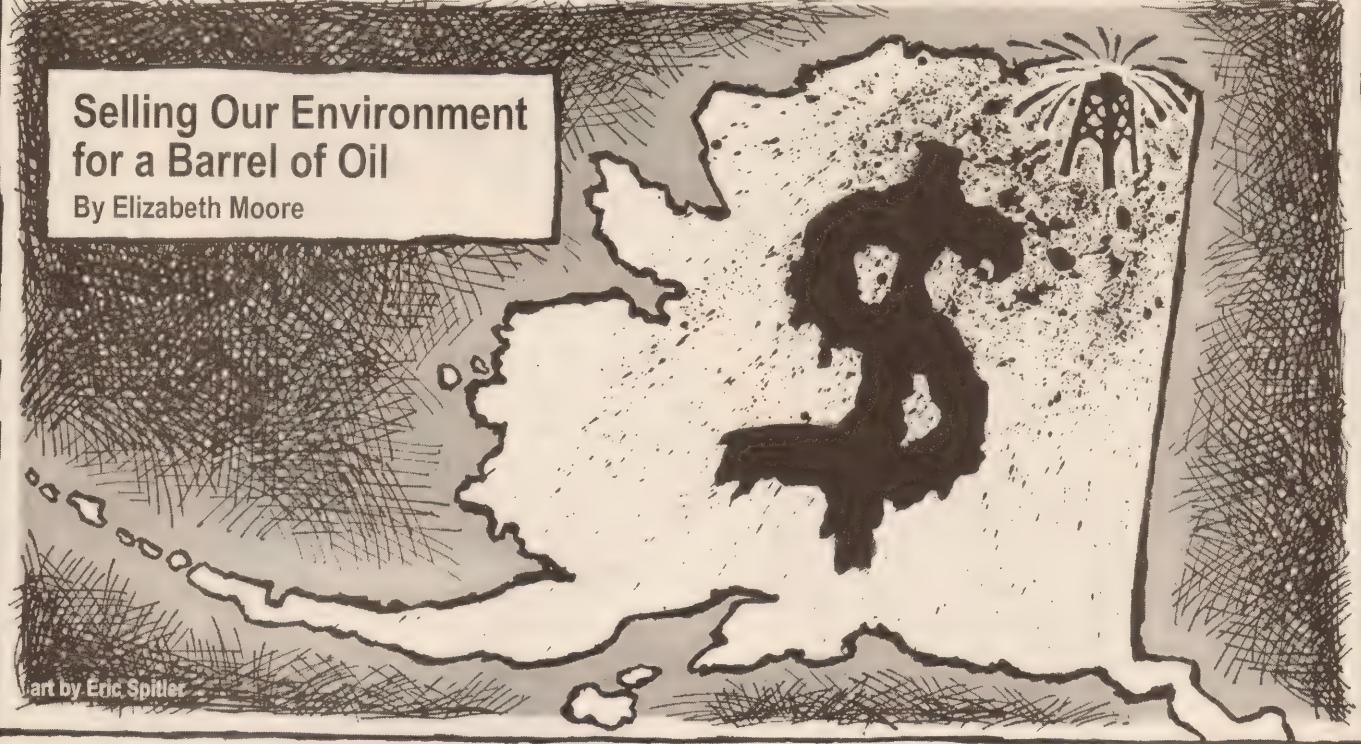
In a press release, Falun Gong pointed to other inconsistencies: "Xinhua News Agency claims that within a minute of the man setting himself ablaze, police had dashed over to him with four fire extinguishers and quickly put out the flames." However, a European journalist based in Beijing told us: "I have never seen police-

(FALUN GONG, continued on page 53)

Selling Our Environment for a Barrel of Oil

By Elizabeth Moore

Cart by Eric Spitzer



DON'T BELIEVE THE "BIG OIL" REPUBLICANS when they try to convince us that more oil drilling is the answer to our energy problems. Their determination to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to drilling is unnecessary, not to mention costly. And that cost isn't going to hurt only taxpayers, but our entire ecosystem. The fact is, ANWR contains the only stretch of arctic coastline in the United States that is not already open to the oil industry.

RISKS VS. BENEFITS

Republicans in Congress tell us that when it comes to environmental protection, the risks to the economy outweigh benefits to public health. Perhaps this is because economic benefits are more tangible than health benefits. Economic benefits (re: more money) are also more evident in the short term. We can't see public health benefits right away, so why worry about them?

However, when it comes to the question of drilling in the Arctic refuge, the Republicans are wrong on both counts.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, there is only a 50 percent chance of finding a six-month supply of oil that would not actually be available for nearly 10 years due to planning and construction. First of all, this is not much of an economic benefit. Secondly, the risks to the environment far outweigh the potential benefits.

In exchange for drilling for a tiny amount of oil that we will not see for ten years (if we see it at all), we risk destroying the habitat of the hundreds of thousands of wild animals that depend on the Arctic Refuge. Developing the coastal plain would involve constructing hundreds of miles of roads and pipelines. In turn, this development would lead to dozens of oil fields that will block wildlife movements and disturb sensitive species.

Other risks include:

- Toxic waste leaking from pipelines onto the fragile tundra contaminate the wetlands.

- Rivers and streambeds will be stripped of millions of tons of gravel to be used to construct roads, airstrips, and drill pads. These are the key habitat for fish and wildlife.
- Heavy equipment, such as helicopters, cargo planes, dump trucks and bulldozers would take over the coastal plain.

The oil industry compares the total size of the proposed oil development footprint to Washington Dulles International Airport. This analogy does not take into account the impact of oil development that would spread mercilessly across the coastal plain.

PARTISANSHIP

Senator Trent Lott (R-MS) summed up the Republicans' obscured view of the energy problem quite accurately: "They don't understand what happened in California?" Lott asked. "Don't they understand it's going to happen again this summer, and that we're headed for rolling brownouts and blackouts?" He added, "Do they want to freeze to death in the dark?"

Lott revealed that he would bring up energy legislation "in June or July amongst the appropriations bills." It is highly controversial in part because it would open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling.

On the other side of the debate, Senator Robert Kerry (D-MA) has spoken of his intent to filibuster the legislation, should it include opening ANWR to drilling. "We need to make it clear to President Bush that this approach to energy policy is unacceptable, and that is why I will - if necessary - filibuster any attempt to open ANWR to this kind of exploitation," he said in February.

Kerry stated that trying to open the wildlife refuge would actually come back to haunt Lott and his GOP colleagues. "The energy policy of this country should not be to drill in a pristine wildlife refuge that provides you a minimal amount of oil for a minimum number of years," Kerry argued. He also stated that opening ANWR

"doesn't reduce your overall dependency on foreign oil and contributes significantly to the problems of global warming, air pollution and our dependency on oil itself."

Senator Kerry has proven himself a longtime ally to the environmental movement. His dedication is demonstrated by his 97 percent rating with the League of Conservation Voters. Trent Lott's overall percent rating is less than 10 percent.

Since the beginning of Bush's term in office, the Republicans have made clear their intent to roll back state environmental safeguards because they're keeping power plants offline. *This is absolutely untrue.* As a matter of fact, even utility executives don't blame anti-pollution laws for the crisis. A spokesman for Houston-based Reliant Energy, which operates four Southern California plants, told The Los Angeles Times that assertions that environmental regulations were holding back power production were "absolutely false."

Dr. Joseph Romm, a former Energy Department official who now heads the non-profit Center for Energy & Climate Solutions, has said, "Power plants were not being built in California because the utility industry did not know what the market rules were going to be. Neither siting rules nor pollution measures were a factor. Blaming those laws for today's shortfall distracts from the very real need to balance the state's supply and demand for electricity."

ENERGY CRISIS

Most observers agree that the primary cause of the energy problem is unexpected growth in the California economy, insufficient investment in new power plants and retail rates that are capped far below the wholesale rate for power.

By no means was the decline in investment in new power plants caused by environmental safeguards. Actually, California's power crisis is a crisis of under-investment. Republicans like to blame the states strict clean-air rules, which they say stopped construction of new power plants and shut down the old ones.

Actually, there are sufficient power plants in the pipeline to meet the near-term demand for power in California. According to a January editorial in the *New York Times*, since April 1999, well before the current crisis, state regulators approved enough new power plants to increase California's electricity supply by 13 percent.

The very idea that the Federal government is considering price caps on wholesale power angers independent electricity producers, some of whom were the Republicans' largest campaign contributors.

According to an Environmental Working Group (EWG is a content provider for public interest groups and concerned citizens who are campaigning to protect the environment.) analysis of Department of Energy records, California utilities cut funding for consumer efficiency programs in half since 1993 to maximize profits in a deregulated market. These cuts have wasted enough power to supply 600,000 homes a year with electricity. Now, thanks to deregulation, it is up to the state to find ways to reward customers for reducing their energy consumption.

Bush's other answer to the California electricity crisis was, of course, to propose opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. The supply of Alaskan oil is *unrelated* to the supply of California electricity.

It is ridiculous to think that adding to pollution is going to help the energy crisis. Simple energy conservation measures, as suggested by the Worldwatch Institute (a nonprofit public policy research organization), could save much more oil than the Arctic

Refuge could ever produce.

DRILLING VS. CONSERVATION

By increasing automobile fuel efficiency standards to 30 mpg, by the year 2020, we could save twice as much energy as the Interior Department believes might be recovered from the coastal plain, according to reports from the Northern Alaska Environmental Center.

The Worldwatch Institute points out that the amount of energy that annually leaks through windows in the US is equivalent to the amount that moves through the Trans-Alaska pipeline every year. By improving the energy efficiency in buildings, we could decrease national energy use by one-third by 2010. This would save twice the amount estimated to be recoverable from the Arctic Refuge (3.2 billion barrels of oil).

Bush stated that the goal is to reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil. If this is true, then the answer is definitely not to squeeze every drop of oil from our nation's resources. What will we do when that's gone? The debate should shift from drilling in the ANWR to focusing on research into alternative fuels and clean energy technologies.

Ninety-five percent of Alaska's vast coastline is already open for drilling. Why is protecting a small fraction of this icy paradise so unreasonable? Bush and his Republican allies should reconsider their determination to use the energy crisis as an excuse to roll back environmental protections

The bottom line is, there is absolutely no reason to destroy what is left of the pristine wilderness in ANWR. It won't do America any good; nor will it really help the oil companies who will have to wait nearly 10 years to see a small amount of oil.

A fight with environmentalists over opening the ANWR would likely result in a new round of charges of "extremism" by Bush's opponents. While Democrats with close ties to the energy industry will support Bush's efforts to open ANWR to drilling, some Republicans will side with the environmental community. For example, Sen. Bob Smith (R-NH), chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, who is up for re-election soon, has said he doesn't favor allowing oil production in ANWR.

If Bush wants to keep his promise of uniting, he is in position to put forward a constructive solution. But, true to form, he and the other Republicans are more inclined to point fingers at environmental protections and disturb pristine areas in order to put a band-aid on the problem rather than taking real, long-term action. **KK**

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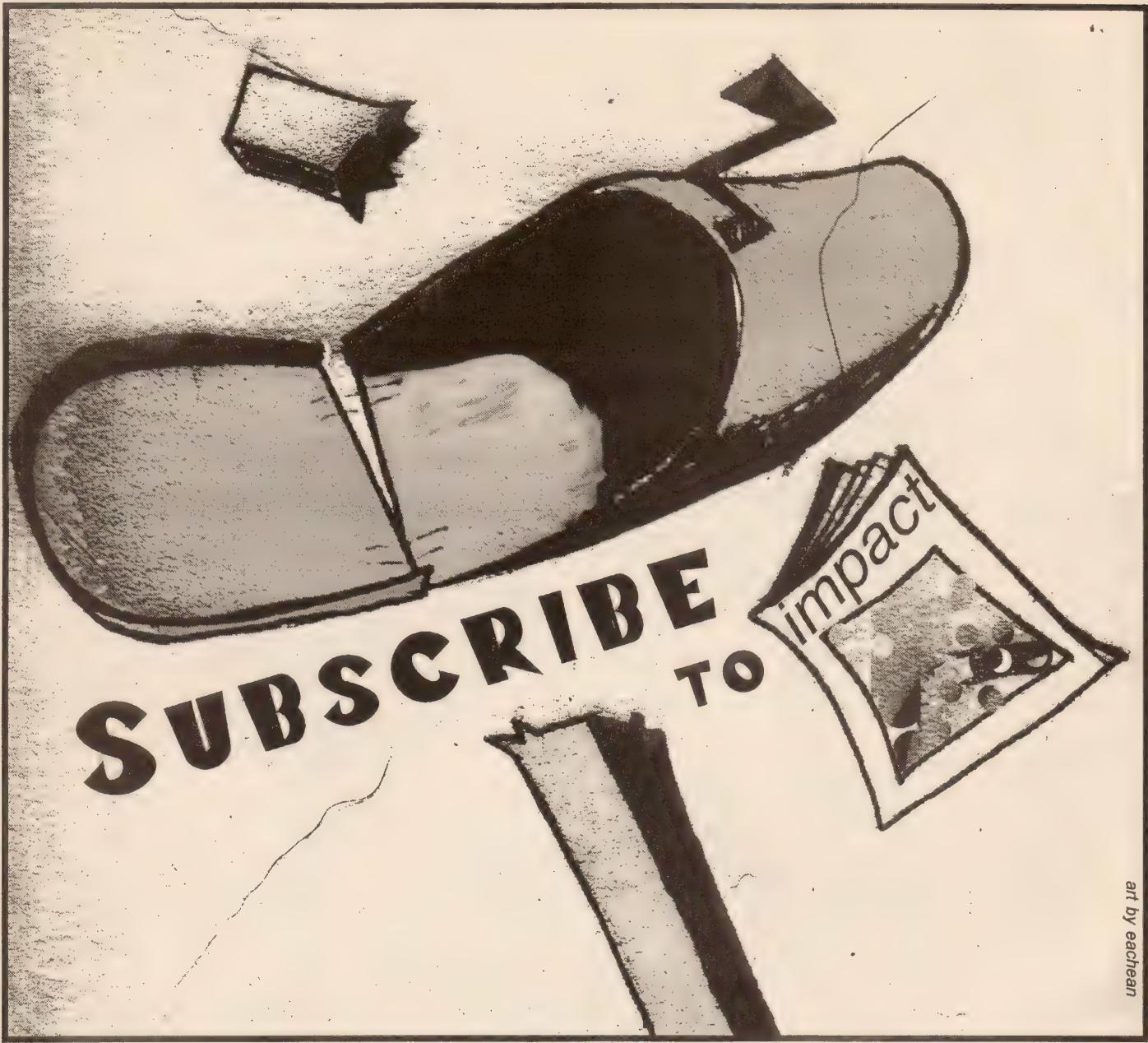
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BY KEITH KNIGHT

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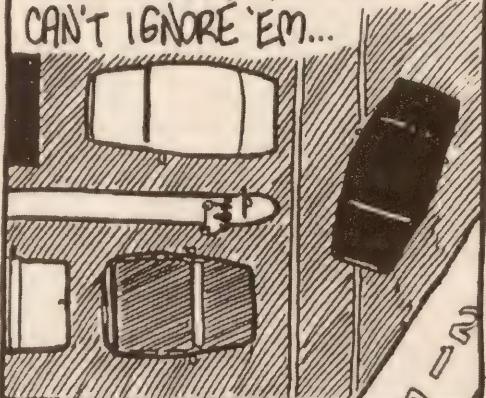


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DEDICATED

MEAT & DAIRY: THE ENVIRONMENTAL COST

BY JEFF NELSON

Leading researchers and ecologists call for tax on meat and dairy to reflect true environmental impact

WHAT IS THE ENVIRONMENTAL COST OF AN ANIMAL PRODUCT-BASED DIET?

There are probably few people, if any, better qualified to answer this question than David Pimentel, a celebrated professor of ecology and agricultural science at Cornell University, in Ithaca, NY.

Professor Pimentel's ecological credentials are virtually unmatched. His research spans the fields of basic population ecology, ecological and economic aspects of pest control, biological control, biotechnology, sustainable agriculture, land and water conservation, natural resource management, and environmental policy. He has published more than 500 scientific papers and 20 books, and has served on many national and government organizations, including the National Academy of Sciences, President's Science Advisory Council, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Technology Assessment of the U.S. Congress, and the U.S. State Department.

Professor Pimentel's position as a foremost authority also derives in part from the fact that during his long and illustrious career he has teamed with scores of other eminent researchers to publish ground-breaking papers on a wide variety of subjects. In fact, many of the most important published, peer-reviewed studies in this area list him as a primary researcher.

LANDMARK Book

Most recently, Professor Pimentel rounded up 22 esteemed colleagues — also top researchers in each of their fields — and compiled an awesome work of breathtaking scope called *Ecological Integrity: Integrating Environment, Conservation and Health* (Island Press, Washington DC, Jan. 2001)

In a separate article on VegSource.com, we recently looked at a sampling of water figures from this momentous book, which the Professor had culled together from a wide variety of reliable sources. Pimentel compared the amount of water it takes to produce a pound of beef versus a pound of various different vegetables — providing a striking contrast.

Among the many very appealing facets of Professor Pimentel is that he has been reasonably accessible and willing to discuss his methods, his sources of data, and how he or his learned colleagues came up with various calculations. This stands in stark contrast to the "corporate" scientists — those who appear to work chiefly to enhance corporate coffers by obfuscating issues, muddying waters and downplaying real risks — who are often unreachable or unwilling to comment or clarify, or even defend, their questionable work.

LAND USE AND ANIMAL AGRICULTURE

With the assistance of Robert Goodland, Ph.D. (who is currently

the Environmental Adviser to the World Bank, where he received Presidential Excellence Awards in 1998 and 1999), Professor Pimentel provides insight into land use for food.

As shown in the table to the right, Goodland and Pimentel cite data which shows that worldwide, food and fiber crops are grown on 12 percent of the Earth's total land area. Another 24 percent of the land is used as pasture to graze livestock that provide meat and milk products, while forests cover an additional 31 percent. The small percentage of forest and grassland set aside as protected national parks to conserve biological diversity amounts to only 3 percent of the total terrestrial ecosystem. Most of the remaining one-third of land area is unsuitable for crops, pasture, and forests because it is too cold, dry, steep, stony, or wet, or the soil is too infertile or shallow to support plant growth.

The researchers point out that currently, a total of 3,265 pounds of agricultural products (including feed and grains) are produced annually to feed each American, while China's food supply averages only 1,029 pounds/capita/year. The world average value is 1,353 pounds/capita/year. The low number for China correlates with a vegetarian diet, the researchers point out, noting that most people in China eat essentially a vegetarian diet.

WATER RESOURCES

Goodland and Pimentel believe that the present and future availability of adequate supplies of fresh water is frequently taken for granted. Natural collectors of water such as rivers and lakes vary in distribution throughout the world and are frequently shared within and between countries. All surface water supplies, but especially those in arid regions, are diminished by evaporation. For instance, reservoir water experiences an average yearly loss of about 24 percent as a result of evaporation.

All vegetation requires and transpires massive amounts of water during its growing season. For example, a corn crop that produces about 7000 pounds/acre of grain will take up and transpire about 534,761 gallons/acre of water during its growing season. To supply this much water to the crop, not only must 855,617 gallons of rain fall per acre, but a significant portion must fall during its growing season. Different crops require different amounts of water:

Potatoes	60 gallons per pound
Wheat	108 gallons per pound
Corn	168 gallons per pound
Rice	229 gallons per pound
Soybeans	240 gallons per pound
Beef	12,009 gallons per pound

The renowned scientists state that perhaps the greatest threat to maintaining freshwater supplies is overdraft of surface and groundwater resources used to supply the needs of the rapidly growing human population and the agriculture that provides its food. Agricultural production "consumes" more fresh water than any other human activity. Worldwide, about 82 percent of the fresh water that is pumped is "consumed" (meaning it is non-recoverable) by agriculture. In the U.S., this figure is about 85 percent. All people require a minimum of 182 gallons/day for cooking, washing, and other domestic needs, however each American uses about 880 gallons/day for domestic needs. For just one 1/4-pounder with cheese, it takes more than 3,000 gallons of water in addition to the averagedaily consumption. About 80 nations in the world are already experiencing significant water shortages. For instance, in China, more than three hundred cities are short of water and the problem is intensifying.

Surface water in rivers and lakes and groundwater provide the freshwater supply for the world. Groundwater resources are renewed at various rates but usually at the extremely slow rate of 0.1 - 0.3 percent per year. Because of their slow recharge rate, groundwater resources must be carefully managed to prevent overdraft.

Humans are not yet effectively conserving groundwater resources, the researchers note, and their overdraft is now a serious problem in many parts of the world. Goodland and Pimentel cite several examples worldwide to support this assertion. Most notably, they state that in the vast U.S. Ogallala aquifer, annual overdraft is 130 to 160 percent above the replacement level. If this continues, this vital aquifer is expected to become no longer productive in about 40 years. High consumption of surface and groundwater resources is beginning to limit the option of irrigating arid regions. Furthermore, the scientists cite research showing that per capita irrigation area is also declining because of salinization and water-logging, both deleterious effects of continual irrigation.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Throughout the book, Pimentel and his colleagues focus on the concept of environmental sustainability. A big part of that equation, they note, is to reduce demand for food, overall:

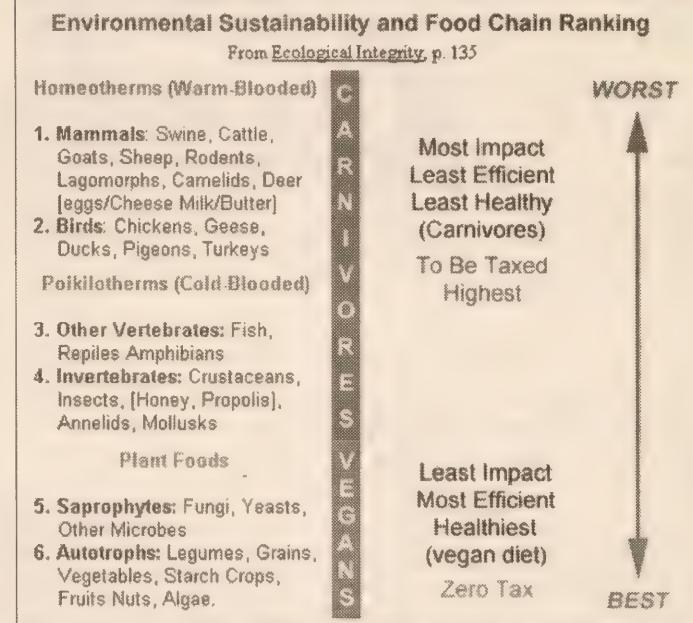
Reducing demand can be achieved by eating more efficiently on the food chain. Diet matters: environmental stability (ES) can be brought about by reducing feeding inefficiencies, such as those existing in producing grain-fed livestock, and encouraging more efficient diets, such as plant-based ones.

The researchers note that the acceptability of plant-based diets is a matter of degree, and that human societies differ in what diet they find comfortable. Among those who restrict their consumption of animal-based foods, there is a continuum from eschewing red meat, then "white" meat (poultry), then mammals or all terrestrial animals. Some will eat cold-blooded animals but not warm-blooded ones (i.e., some people eat fish, but not rabbits or chickens).

The figure in the upper right shows the environmental sustainability ratings for where people eat on the food chain, and a proposed tax logic to reflect the true environmental cost for various foods.

In their book, the researchers make detailed and virtually unsailable arguments to support their wise conclusions on how we can achieve long-term sustainability and integrity in agriculture:

1. Most people of the world — those already at the efficient, low-impact end of the food chain — would stay at the low end of the chain, but would diversify their diet;
2. Affluent people now eating at the top of the food chain



would pay the full costs of their high-impact food choices, consonant with the "polluter pays" principal, via food taxation for those foods depleting resources at very high rates — or elect to consume more efficiently lower down the food chain;

3. People starting to move up the food chain (e.g., in China and India) would be encouraged to stop where they are — and to consider moving back down the chain.

Pimentel and Goodland note that incentives are needed to promote grain-based diets by applying good economics and good environmental management to food and agriculture. In particular, conversion efficiency and "polluter pays" principals should be used in setting full-price policies, which internalizes environmental and social costs. They note that cattle feedlots and slaughterhouses consume much water and generate much highly polluting waste. Wastes often are not efficiently reused but are instead disposed of in the nearest watercourse. Feed and forage production consume even more water. These costs need to be internalized.

In the researchers' view, the highest taxes would fall on the least efficient converters, namely hogs and cattle. Slightly lower taxes would be assessed on sheep and those cattle grazing natural grassland.

No taxes would be paid on grains (rice, maize, wheat, buckwheat), starches (potatoes, cassava), and legumes (soy, pulses, beans, peas, peanuts). Modest subsidies on coarse grains (millet, pearl millet, sorghum) would alleviate hunger and are less likely to be abused.

Encouragement for domestic or village-scale beneficiation, such as of peanuts to peanut butter and cashew fruits to roasted nuts, often doubles or triples the profit to the grower. Peanut butter and cornflakes were invented expressly to increase the consumption of those low-impact foods at the bottom of the food chain.

The authors conclude that "Adoption of such policies will not solve world hunger overnight, but it will certainly help." ☺

On April 20-22 in Quebec City, Canada, leaders of thirty-four nations will meet to further the ratification of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), set to be

completed by 2005. Under the jurisdiction of the Organization of American States (OAS), this "effort to unite the economies of the Western Hemisphere [excluding Cuba] into a single free trade arrangement" began during the December 1994 Summit of the Americas in Miami. The negotiation process involves a three-tiered model of selected international officials, designated as: the Trade Ministers of the Western Hemisphere (who have met four times since 1994); 9 FTAA Negotiating Groups (appointed by the Ministers and recently consolidated from 12 Working Groups); and the Vice Ministers of Trade of the Western Hemisphere.

According to OAS, "These [FTAA] negotiations will encompass all of those areas previously negotiated and which fall within the World Trade Organization's ambit, with the goal of going beyond previously agreed multilateral liberalization within the Hemisphere, wherever possible. Importantly, however, the FTAA negotiations will include areas not presently under the WTO such as a common investment regime, government procurement, and competition policy, which are not yet subject to commonly-agreed disciplines among a large number of trading nations. Equally, the FTAA negotiations will examine the interrelationship which exists between certain key negotiating areas, such as agriculture and market access; services and investment; competition policy and subsidies; and antidumping and countervailing duties, among others, so as to ensure that the outcome of negotiations are as efficient and liberalizing as possible."

Rise Up, Fight Back

A vast array of NGO's (Non-Governmental Organizations), unions, grassroots organizations, and concerned citizens have united to contest the FTAA's decidedly undemocratic process and its in-

FTAA: Fueling the Race to the Bottom

By SF Independent Media Center
Michelle Steinberg, Mark Burdett



Photo: David Hanks/Global Exchange

tended goals. If implemented, the FTAA policies, a more extreme version of NAFTA, will spread the latter's devastating effects throughout the Americas, broadening current disparities between rich and poor and destroying the environment, as corporate interests take precedence above all else. The proposals will flagrantly undermine existing government regulations aimed at protecting workers or the environment, in a constant attempt to maximize multinational profits. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the United Electrical Workers Union have both passed resolutions condemning the FTAA, citing NAFTA's negative impact.

An Alternate Vision

Alliance for Responsible Trade (ART), which includes representatives of U.S. labor, environmental, human-rights, religious, women's, family-farm, development and public-policy organiza-

tions, has presented the Committee of Government Representatives on Civil Society Participation with "Alternatives for the Americas: Building a Hemispheric Peoples' Agreement". The document contends that "trade and investment should not be ends in themselves, but rather the instruments for achieving just and sustainable development. Citizens must have the right to participate in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of hemispheric social and economic policies. Central goals of these policies should be to promote economic sovereignty, social welfare, and reduced inequality at all levels."

Where From Here?

Get involved and be informed. The resources below will help you learn more about this undemocratic and devastating plan. The FTAA is based on exploiting people and the planet for profit, resulting in poverty, misery and ecological destruction. If people like you don't fight back, big bucks will win the battle.

This is one battle we can not afford to lose. KK

Make an IMPACT

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<http://sf.indymedia.org> • <http://www.indymedia.org>

Stop the FTAA

<http://www.stopftaa.org>

Alliance for Responsible Trade

<http://www.art-us.org>

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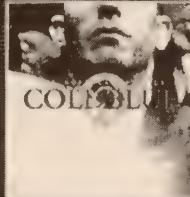
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Direct Action As The Tool For Revolution

By Darren Kramer

WHEN THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CNT (Confederacion Nacional de Trabajo) and the FAI (Federacion Anarquista Iberica) were brought to power by an organized militia of armed workers in the streets of Barcelona in 1936, a new historical standard was set for revolution. The rise of fascism was stopped and overthrown through a gradual reconstruction of society that they called "social revolution". As clearly stated in their political agenda, this included strikes, sabotage, expropriation, and armed revolt. The social experiment of social revolution was a success. Fascist dictator Francisco Franco was ousted from power and the Guardia Civil was driven from the greater parts of Spain. Private ownership of land and the means of production were replaced by organized trade unions of workers and committees. Landlords were driven out. This society secured the rights of the individual by unprivatizing basic needs such as housing, food, and land. Also, a directly democratic union of workers was put to power in place of private ownership of the means of production. A new society was built in the shell of the old.

Today we see these principles being adopted in the new left under the term that was popularized during that era: direct action. Despite its use, it is a grossly misunderstood concept throughout the *entire* political spectrum. Governments call it "terrorism", while referring to their military campaigns as "internationalism". The corporate media gives government a public forum. Conservatives, with their faith in the political status quo, accept whatever government says. Liberals see no need for direct action. Even some progressive radicals are afraid to use it. It is the responsibility of those creating social revolution to clear the air on why direct action is necessary to maximize direct democracy for all.

There is so much misrepresentation and misunderstanding regarding this issue that it is important to develop a genuine understanding of the concept of "direct action" and how it relates to fascism and revolution.

First, what is fascism? *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* offers two definitions: the first is the one that most Americans are familiar with and that is the political movement born out of Germany in the '20s and '30s; the second is a more broad definition that describes fascism as, "a tendency toward or actual exercise of strong autocratic or dictatorial control." In this context, fascism is the polar opposite of libertarianism and direct democracy.

The term "revolution", for the average American, whips up imagery of chaos and bloody revenge. *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* offers two relevant definitions not rooted in bias or superstition. The first is, "a fundamental change in political organization." The second is, "a fundamental change in the way of thinking about or visualizing something." It is to these ends that direct action seeks to change the social situation.

Nowadays, when less informed people think of direct action, they think of masked radicals committing property destruction in the dead of night. Or they think of "mobs" of young people fighting

police. It is not that simple. Have you ever been hungry and without money? Have you ever been hungry and destitute enough to "steal" food from a grocery store? If you have, you have committed a form of direct action. If you have not, would you oppose someone in that position who did? If not, you have allowed for only one solution for the economically oppressed sectors of our population – starve. Are these the sort of choices that we want people in society to be faced with? To either place themselves at the risk of the violence perpetrated by those in a position of authority, or to submissively have their rights stripped away. These are the situations that the social system places many people in, and for some, the political authorities are not interested in providing solutions to those situations. In fact, sometimes these situations are used to the authorities' advantage, such as in the case of "free" trade, which allows corporate heads to move labor to economically disadvantaged nations and exploit the people by paying them less than livable wages.

It may come as a surprise to learn that fascism is on the rise in America. Before you throw away this magazine and brand me as a black-clad radical, open your mind to this argument. Approximately 95% of America's capital is in the hands of 5% of its population. The privatization of social production is now a global concept with institutions such as the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank governing economics in America and other countries. These institutions have overwhelmingly favored policies that allow multi-national corporations to exercise more governing control over all parts of the world. To make matters even more interesting, the majority of corporations and global capital institutions work in very "closed door" ways that allow for virtually no public accountability. A perfect example is the new Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) (*more on the FTAA on page 24*). Members of the United States Congress are left out of the decision-making process, having not set any goals or delegation for United States participation. However, 500 corporate representatives have full security clearance and access to FTAA documents. FTAA expands NAFTA policies to the majority of the Western hemisphere. This gives corporations the ability to overturn laws in other countries (such as environmental protection laws and labor laws, both of which have taken bitter grassroots struggles to enact) if they are deemed as "trade barriers". When the power of corporations reaches this level it is safe to assume that it is not democratic. Noam Chomsky, prominent anti-authoritarian and MIT professor, describes the existing system as "corporate aristocracy". I would go one further and call it "political fascism". The only difference between the autocratic control that Germany had during World War II and the autocratic control that exists now is that the swastikas have been turned in for golden arches.

What do we do about this undemocratic conglomeration of power? We can make appeals to those in power through letter writing campaigns. We can work within the system that secures their power and vote for the candidates of our choice. . We can do everything in our power within the social framework that exists.

These options are well intentioned and sometimes effective, but what do we do when this framework has failed to secure individual rights and provide direct democracy?

Direct action is a very broad concept that has been coined by the progressive left to describe a strategy that looks to revolutionize social ills. It is a strategy that seeks the direct reorganization of social conditions in order to create a fundamental change in political organization or social ideas. It is because of this that the means must reflect the ends to be truly direct in its nature. Classical anarchist philosopher Voltarine De Cleyre stated in her essay entitled "Direct Action" that "every person who ever had a plan to do anything and went and did it, or who laid his plan before others, and won their co-operation to do it with him, without going to external authorities to please do the thing for them, was a direct actionist." As De Cleyre stated, direct action is a strategy that is not interested in seeking the approval of political and social authorities. How could direct action seek their legitimacy when the majority of the social problems that this strategy is supposed to remedy are created by those who have monopolized political and economic decisions? Every person who uses direct action does so because they believe that the existing social system is tailored to suit the needs of those who wield economic and political power. This intrinsically makes direct action revolutionary, since it recognizes a systemic root to a problem and reconstructs the social relation. The profitable becomes unprofitable. The undemocratic becomes democratic. Against the system of coercive authority, those who use direct action find a direct route of change to solve a social problem that other options do not remedy. In other words, it is by necessity that the oppressed must use direct action. With the vast majority of people in a social and economic class that has no hand in decision-making or ownership, it is safe to assume that you are oppressed.

Direct action creates revolution and systemic change. It does not wait for the power elite to create it, an often impractical hope. It solves immediate injustice with immediate action. Does this sound like a "by any means necessary" approach to things? It is. But it is only those who do not feel the direct effects of injustice in their personal lives that can afford not to take such an approach. Blissful ignorance is an illegitimate reason to oppose such a strategy. For most, it is the only solution to retaining their rights against a sometimes brutally violent social system. In fact, direct action is the strongest protest against violence that any individual or social movement can make. Through symbolism and example, direct action says, "Fascism is intolerable. Life is our right."

Today we see direct action being embraced by movements that were even once viewed as "fringe". The simple fact that they are no

longer perceived as outlying issues is a testimony to the effectiveness of this strategy in creating revolution. A prime example is the Animal Liberation Front (ALF). The ALF is a loosely knit network of animal rights activists that employ the use of direct action to advance a vegan revolution. Through their work, a new social debate has been born. Its history begins in England in the 1960's, when activists put their bodies between themselves and a series of fox hunts as a radical new approach to protesting animal cruelty and abuse. Its success brought the movement widespread publicity and the ALF was born. Since then, the vivisection and fur industries, once highly profitable industries founded on the unnecessary abuse of animal life, are virtually obsolete in Britain. The very few remaining vivisectors in England are under immense public pressure to stop their practice and the fur industry in England is altogether gone. In America, where the ALF has recently taken root, animal cruelty is being thrown into public discourse to the point where very public figures have become outspoken about the abuse.



art by greg rebis

One of the most significant direct actions of recent events was the shutting down of the World Trade Organization's meeting in Seattle on November 30, 1999. The impact of that direct action was felt all over the globe, injected globalization into public discourse, and has provided inspiration for a whole new generation of activism that some have labeled "the new left". This action has shifted ideas and social organization. It has created revolution.

The corporate aristocracy has proven that it will go to violent extremes to secure its position. Tear gas, pepper spray, para-military police forces, and imperialist wars are just some examples of what means they will use. If we want a society founded on new principles and ideas, especially ones rooted in freedom, cooperation, compassion, non-violence, and democracy, then we must shut down the institutions that are infringing on those

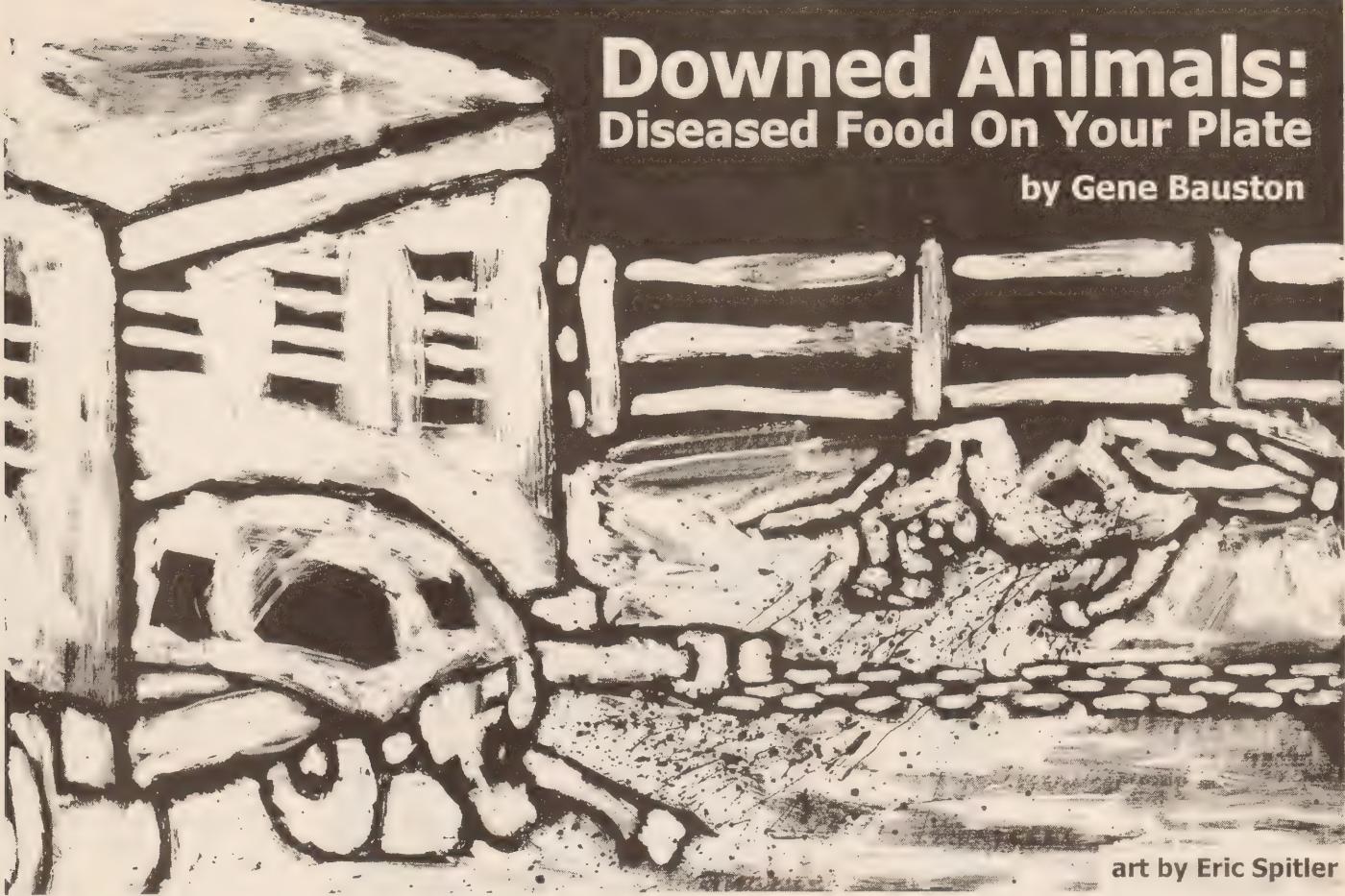
ideals while creating the alternative in its place. We can do that with direct action. □

**M a k e a n
I M P A C T**

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Direct Action Network
<http://www.directactionnetwork.org/>

Animal Liberation Front
<http://www.animalliberationfront.com/>



Downed Animals: Diseased Food On Your Plate

by Gene Bauston

art by Eric Spitzer

A sick cow, too weak to stand, is pulled off of a truck by a tractor and chain, then falls four feet to the ground at a stockyard. A frail, day old calf is dragged through an auction ring by a back leg, while another calf, nearly comatose, is left in a corner to die. These are not isolated incidents. Across the United States, downed animals, animals too sick or weak to even stand, are being marketed and slaughtered for human food. They suffer horribly at stockyards and slaughterhouses, and their use in the human food chain poses a threat to human health.

IT IS PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO HANDLE

and transport downed animals humanely. Even industry groups, including Central Livestock and Empire Livestock, admit, "...it is near impossible to unload and/or move downed animals in a humane manner without first euthanizing them". Downed animals are commonly moved by the most convenient, though least humane methods. They are dragged with wrenches and chains or pushed with tractors and forklifts, procedures which cause injuries ranging from bruises and abrasions to broken bones and torn ligaments. When former United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Edward Madigan saw videotape showing downed animals being moved by these methods, he said he was "disgusted

and repelled". Incapable of getting to food or water troughs, downed animals endure hours or days without receiving these basic needs. In addition, they are denied necessary veterinary attention, and many die of gross neglect.

Most downed animals are victims of the dairy industry - either worn out milk cows or fragile baby calves. Too often, dairy farmers ship dying animals to the stockyard in order to avoid the cost of disposing of dead animals on the farm. In response to nationwide news coverage criticizing industry's irresponsible mistreatment of downed animals, "Hoards Dairyman" wrote, "The black eye the livestock industry got over the widespread 'downer cow' publicity was self-inflicted. Frankly, we got what we deserved... Because of

that unfortunate exposure, the image of livestock people has been tarnished, and consumers have yet another reason not to eat meat... There's no excuse for shipping animals which cannot walk." In addition to downed dairy cattle, incapacitated pigs, sheep, goats, and horses are also sold for slaughter. Responding to media pressure, "Pork Report" warned, "Producers should not 'push their problems' on trucks and hope to receive some salvage value for the animal or use the stockyards as a disposal system for this type of animal."

Marketing and slaughtering downed animals for food poses a serious threat to consumers. An article from "Meat and Poultry" magazine cited university research and reported, "...lame cattle usually have higher levels of bacteria on their carcasses. Lame animals spend more time lying down, which increases the likelihood they will be contaminated with fecal matter." Of course, downed animals spend all of their time on the ground. In addition to an increased risk of bacterial contamination, there is scientific evidence which indicates that some downed cattle in the United States may be afflicted with a variant of 'Mad Cow Disease' (BSE or Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy). When the population of a Wisconsin mink ranch was decimated by an outbreak of transmissible mink encephalopathy, scientists hypothesized that the disease was caused by the mink's diet - a diet comprised primarily of downed dairy cows. After researching the incident, published findings "suggest[ed] the presence of an unrecognized BSE-like disease in the United States".

Attempting to address the downed animal problem and to allay public concerns, many stockyards and slaughterhouses have stopped accepting downed animals. This 'no downer' approach has caused farmers and livestock handlers to take steps to prevent downed animals in the first place. Commenting on this, dairy veterinarian Lester Friedlander stated, "This winter the slaughterhouses in this area stopped accepting downed cows... I have been very impressed with the response my [dairy] clients

have shown since they have not been able to sell downed cows. I have been called to attend more of the downed cows to provide veterinary assistance and to humanely euthanize the hopeless cases... In short, not selling cows as downers has not hurt my clients but has re-focused attention in the right direction - prevention and rehabilitation."

There is a growing consensus, even among industry representatives, that downed animals should not be marketed or slaughtered for human food as an article from *Beef Today*, entitled 'Zero Tolerance for Downer Cows', indicates. The article begins, "A downer cow in the sale barn aisle is not a pretty sight. For starters, it's a sure bet that everyone involved, including the cow, loses. To compound the problem, it is highly visible fuel for animal rights organizations". After providing examples of stockyards that have implemented 'no downer' policies, whereby they do not market downed animals, the article ends with a quote from a Colorado beef specialist, "A downer animal is a violation of our responsibility as stewards of livestock. We need to prevent these situations for a lot of reasons - the most important being, it's the right thing to do."

Unfortunately, while some within the livestock industry have acted responsibly, others continue to market downed animals, sometimes in violation of their own stated 'no downer' policies. The USDA surveyed stockyards across the U.S. and found the livestock industry's self-police to be flawed. In documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, the USDA reported, "Though many market representatives responded without hesitation that they would turn downers away from their doors, it became evident that some stockyards did not have a firm 'no downer' policy in place and would make exceptions..."

Also of concern, the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration have failed to grant a petition filed by Farm Sanctuary to prohibit the slaughter of downed animals for human food. Citing federal laws, the petition argues that downed animals are 'diseased' by definition, and therefore asserts that



these animals cannot be used for human food. Responding to this, the USDA shockingly asserted that the law did not prohibit diseased animals from being used for human food. (Letters are currently needed to urge that this petition be granted. Please see sidebar for details.)

Although thousands of downed animals are slaughtered across America every year, these animals represent a very small percentage of all livestock slaughtered. No farmer depends on the sale of downed animals for a livelihood. In addition, the vast majority of downed animals sent to stockyards and slaughterhouses could be prevented with basic management and handling improvements on the farm and in transportation. According to an article in "Meat & Poultry" magazine, "Ninety percent of all downers are preventable... the industry can eliminate downers by euthanizing them".

Although the livestock industry has been aware of downed animal suffering for decades, this problem has not been corrected through voluntary measures. Unscrupulous downed animal dealers and slaughterhouse operators are circumventing others' 'no downer' policies, exploiting a niche market, and undercutting voluntary efforts to resolve this problem through preventative measures. It is increasingly clear that this problem will continue in the absence of government action.

In addition to the petition urging a prohibition on downed animal slaughter that is currently before the FDA, the Downed Animal Protection Act has been introduced in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. While the petition seeks a

Although the livestock industry has been aware of downed animal suffering for decades, this problem has not been corrected through voluntary measures.

prohibition on the slaughter of downed animals for human food, the Downed Animal Protection Act requires the humane euthanasia of downed animals in the marketing channels. With this issue at the slaughterhouse, the legislative proposal addresses it in marketing channels (i.e. at auctions and in transit). Both the petition and the legislative effort ultimately seek to remove the market for downed animals, and thereby provide a strong and clear incentive for farmers and livestock handlers to focus on providing better care and preventing downed animals in the first place. KK

Gene Bauston is the co-founder of Farm Sanctuary. He holds a degree in agricultural economics from Cornell University.

Make an IMPACT

No Downers

<http://www.nodowners.org>

Farm Sanctuary

P.O. Box 150, Watkins Glen, NY 14891

ph 607-583-2225; fx 607-583-2041

<http://www.farmsanctuary.org>

Veggie Alternatives from VegSource

<http://www.vegsouce.com>

"No Downers" Action Alert

Last year, the USDA announced a landmark policy to stop purchasing meat from downed cows for Federal programs, including the National School Lunch Program. The Agency stated, "USDA will no longer accept ground beef that includes product from non-ambulatory cattle, commonly known as 'downers'." This development shows a growing consensus - even among livestock industry and government officials - that the marketing and slaughter of downed animals is unacceptable.

Our chances of stopping the downed animal trade are better now than ever, and letters are needed to urge the Food and Drug Administration to grant petition 98P-0151/CP1 to prohibit the slaughter of downed animals. Please write today, and please encourage others to write as well:

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Dockets Management Branch
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852
FAX: 301-827-6870
E-mail: FDADockets@oc.fda.gov

PLEASE NOTE: IT IS CRITICAL TO REFER TO DOCKET NUMBER 98P-0151/CP1 IN YOUR LETTER.

Here are some points you may wish to include:

- * Animals who are too sick or injured even to stand should not be allowed to enter the human food chain.
- * In addition to posing an increased risk for bacterial contamination, there is evidence that some downed animals may be afflicted with a form of BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or "Mad Cow Disease"), a disease which has been linked to the fatal human illness, CJD (or Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease).
- * It is impossible to move downed animals humanely, and they are typically pushed with tractors or dragged with chains - inhumane processes which cause injuries ranging from bruises and abrasions, to broken bones and torn ligaments.
- * Downed animals comprise a very small percentage of animals slaughtered, and prohibiting their marketing will cause no undue economic hardship.
- * Industry experts have estimated that 90% percent of downed animals can be prevented with better care and handling. Removing the market for downed animals will provide an incentive to industry to prevent downed animals in the first place.

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★QUICKIES...a little bit on a lot of RECORDS★

TOP PICKS

Below represents the "best of" music that was reviewed for this issue as determined by IMPACT press music reviewers.

Amy Ray • *Stag* • Daemon • Ray, one half of the Indigo Girls, also has an indie label on the side. This is her first solo album on that label, a collection of songs Ray wrote that didn't quite fit in with the soft, sensitive style of the Indigo Girls. The songs are sometimes folksy, sometimes gritty, but always brimming with the passion and life we've come to expect from the Ray-written songs of years past. Only this time, she's gone electric and included some surprise guests such as Joan Jett and the Rock-A-Teens.

Even Johansen • *Quiet & Still* • FiveOne Inc. • Breathtaking. I've been sitting here trying to come up with one good word to describe this CD and I think that's it. Johansen is a well-known artist in the UK and is still a member of the London-based band Libido. Thankfully, he has found the time to make this beautiful collection of songs. This is very reminiscent of Hayden, though Johansen's voice actually sounds a lot like Thom Yorke of Radiohead. Actually, these songs sound even more like Radiohead's mellow stuff. "Let Down, No Surprises" and "Karma Police" from OK Computer come to mind immediately. I think he has some slow Cure sounds in there as well. I'm sure that all sounds too good to be true, especially from someone you've never heard of, but believe me, the guy is for real. Very real.

Thursday • *Full Collapse* • Victory Records • Thursday is a band good enough for any day of the week. Ok, lame jokes aside, this is a fantastic album from five fellas outta New Jersey. Using awe-inspiring melodies and hooks, Thursday offers up their own version of hardcore rock and roll. This isn't East Coast hardcore, this is Thursday-style hardcore, combining screamed and well-sung vocals with intricate guitar parts, heavy riffs, and ever changing tempos that are bound to absorb the listener. (Elements of At The Drive In, ErrorType:11, Boy Sets Fire and Jimmy Eat World – among others – appear at various points.) Each track offers a new twist on their own style, a style that is sure to be ripped off by numerous bands, unlikely ever accomplishing it with the skill these guys have. This is a must have album!

Various Artists • *The Braindance Coincidence* • Rephlex Records • Rephlex celebrates its tenth anniversary by releasing their first ever compilation. Braindance is quite unique, as evidenced by the CD's tracks. The Gentle People start off with "Journey," which includes lounge-y percussion and sensual vocals. Global Goon follows it with "Long Whiney," with a midtempo beat and plenty of synths. Cylob's

"Rewind" features a rapping computer, which sounds like Stephen Hawking's digitally generated voice. For an 80's Electro feel, there's DMX Krew's "The Glass Room" and D'Arcangelo's "Diagram VII (80's mix)." The Railway Raver's "Keith's Trumpets" has more of a House beat, while Baby Ford's "Normal" receives the remix treatment from AFX (Richard D. James), giving it a bit of a Breakbeat sound. Squarepusher contributes "Psultan" under his Chaos A.D. moniker. Bogdan Raczyński's "Death to the Natives" explores the more experimental and extreme realms of this genre with mind bending bpm's. Finally, Ovula closes out the album with "Afternoon Girl," where waves of atmospheric sounds are contrasted by punctuated scratches and staccato beats. This album is perfect as an introduction to this magnificent form of music, put out by one of the premier labels in experimental electronic music.

Various Artists • *Twinkie Legal Defense Fund* • Their Old Stuff Is Better Records • Twenty-one songs by bands that you have probably never heard of. This, however, is a good opportunity to hear them. This cheap sampler sounds good and has far more good bands than shitty ones, as is so seldom the case in samplers. Songs vary from the wacky "Spaghetti Dinner" by The 4 Spits to the dark and disturbing "Stacks and Stacks of Suicide Notes" by Sam Hell and "I Love You, Daddy" by Ritualistic Child Abuse. There are lots of good tunes on this hunka plastic.

Wagon Christ • *Musipal* • Ninja Tune Records • Luke Vibert comes from Cornwall, England, which should clue you in on the type of music he creates (Aphex Twin and Muziq are from there as well). Actually, that is not a fair assumption to make about *Musipal*. Sure, "Natural Suction" sounds like it belongs on Aphex's *Richard D. James Album*, but he also enjoys creating other types of music. Under the Wagon Christ pseudonym Vibert gets a bit jazzy and a bit funky at the same time. The title track features a groovy drum beat and horn samples that remind you of 1970's blues, while injecting some Hawaiian hula stuff and harps, even hand claps! "Receiver" is almost a Breakbeat song, while "Chris Chana" shamefully lifts the keyboard riff from the Black Eyed Peas's "Joints and Jam" song. "Tomorrow Acid" has a synthesizer loop that hints at IDM, showing you that at any point, it might degenerate into a glitch fest. The silliest song is "Thick Stew," which has plenty of animal sounds layered over a bouncy beat and spacey keyboard effects.

CD releases

Abilene • *self-titled* • Slowdime Records • This trio features former members from Hoover, Lustre King and Chisell Drill Hammer. Their musical past is evident in this self-titled debut, where songs tend to be slow and long, with few vocals and plenty of guitar picking. Precise drumming by Scott Adamson plays a role in each song, setting the pace which is followed by Craig Ackerman and Alex Dunham playing bass and guitar, respectively.

ADNY • *Selections 97-2000* • Turbo Records • Chilean born Alexi Delano blends Soul, Techno and other types of electronica for his unique take on Deep House music. This sound is characterized by mid tempo beats, ethereal keyboards, sensual samples and additional percussion elements, usually Conga drums. He also experiments a bit with Electro, as heard on "Desierto de Atacama." The songs are perfect for any dance floor, yet also hold up during individual listening.

Against All Authority • *Nothing New for Trash Like You* • Sub City • This release doesn't really require much of a review. It's 18 tracks of "out-of-print/hard-to-find songs from 1992-2000". AAA are from Miami and this release is a great overview of their powerful, snotty, melodic punk rock style. Obviously, they've been around a while – and over the past nine years they've grown into a mainstay of the punk scene. This release benefits The Tooth Fairy Project, "a national scientific study looking for links between cancer and environmental radioactive pollution".

AM Stereo • *Suffocation Town* • Intelligent Records • The vocals are great, the driving force of this album for me. While none of the guys who sing on here are particularly good, their delivery and vocals are honest, sincere and committed to the intention of each track. The music is rock and roll with strong melodies and a good amount of feedback. It reminds me somewhat of Pinehurst Kids or Seven Story Mountain, but less punk.

AM/FM • *Mutilate Us* • Polyvinyl Record Co. • *Mutilate Us* features pop arrangements and acoustic guitar work with somewhat layered and effected vocals. You'll find yourself tapping your toes to "Secretly Odds in Knowing Normal Worlds," while "A Best Man (Put My Girlfriend on Fire)" will make you a bit sad. "You and Me at 53" sounds kind of like Blur, and "Those Long Arms" has a country flavor. As you can see, AM/FM's new album is categorized, but easy to enjoy.

Ann Beretta • *New Union...Old Glory* • Lookout! • When the anthems of Avail are combined with the teen angst of Green Day, you get the general idea of Ann Beretta. There's a working-class feel to the empowering, socially aware tunes on this 12-track release. While it won't bowl you over with chunky riffs, speed-core or wild tempo changes, you'll find the "homely" melodies, akin to Social Distortion, pulling you in more with each listen.

Antifreeze • *Four Letter Words* • Kung Fu Records • Fans of the Ataris will love Antifreeze. Probably because the Ataris themselves helped "discover" this band, and Ataris singer Kris Roe even produced the album. The result is 14 excellent tracks of fast pop-punk, full of harmonies and melodies. They even employed the use of a drum machine and keyboards on a few tracks, something that most punk bands tend to stay away from.

Aviso Hara • *Made From Scratch* • Powerbunny 4x4 Records • Aviso Hara has been around New Jersey since 1995. They continue to play their unique blend of noise-rock and pop, making them not exactly easy to label. This is a cool CD comprised of their early singles and six previously unreleased songs.

Big Bud • *Late Night Blues* • Good Looking Records • On this double CD, Big Bud goes further than before with his musical exploration. Disc One is supposed to be a live recording, with half effects on the chatter between tracks and fake audience clapping. (It might have been live, but it sounded fake to me!). It starts out with the Hip Hop flavored "Return of the Spiritman," with Big Bud rapping over a mighty groovy, downtempo beat. "Baby" and "Mombassa" have a dZihani & Kamien feel to them, with plenty of ethnic percussion and ethereal atmospheres. Disc Two brings him back to reality, with 8 solid tracks of the Drum N' Bass he is known for. My one complaint about this CD is that the tracks take way too long to develop, making them too repetitive. While this

★QUICKIES...a little bit on a lot of RECORDS★

may be advantageous on a dance floor, it tries the patience when listening to it at home.

Big In Japan • *Destroy The New Rock* • Honest Don's Records • Dammit! This Honest Don guy is a fricking genius! I think I've reviewed about 10 discs from this company and not one dog in the bunch. This is no exception. Mixing a blend of big melodies, buzzing guitars and punk-pop rhythms, this band switches from pop to punk on a dime. It's Elvis Costello at 20 again. It's more fun than Blink or Green Day and they've never even BEEN to Japan.

Bill Rieflin/Chris Connelly • *Largo* • First World Music • If you know of either Bill Rieflin or Chris Connelly, you know that Connelly has played for the Revolving Cocks and Ministry, where Rieflin was the drummer. With that knowledge, you might expect *Largo* to be an all-out, heavily distorted guitar affair, where chaos rules. Nothing could be further from the truth. Rieflin had already proven that he could step from behind Ministry's shadow and go out on his own, with the critically acclaimed *Birth of a Giant*. Even then, he toned down the guitars and created a sound all his own, even with Pop influences. He had wanted to record with Connelly since their Ministry days, and given the opportunity, they jumped on the chance to drop a few jaws. First of all, there are barely any drums at all. The guitar parts are acoustic, and they added piano and a string section. Chris Connelly's singing is eerily reminiscent of Talking Head David Byrne. These two artists have shown that they have grown up, and they would like us to come with them to a new musical place.

Bis • *Music For A Stranger World* • Lookout! Records • You may have noticed that the 1980's are making a comeback of sorts. Bands like the Faint and the DMX Krew capitalize on those old synth pop sounds and update them for the new century. Bis's newest album follows in that tradition, but with a more polished sound. Their adopting of that highly danceable beat of New Wave acts like New Order does not come across as sarcastic. In fact, the fact that they really dig this kind of music is endearing. The vocals are shared by both a male and a female, making *Music for a Stranger World* an engaging and enjoyable listen.

Boris The Sprinkler • Gay • Go-Kart Records • Boris The Sprinkler continues their campaign to lower the collective IQ of the entire world. This is really, really stupid, but doggonit, it's also a darn good disc. You'll love touching songs like "I Don't Really Want to Walk to Taco Bell Without You" and "Motherfucker, Are You Ready to Rock?" This is fun rock and roll music with a non-threatening, pseudo-badass attitude. Gay is a disc that you will try very hard to get out of your head, but you can't, so just give up and let them take over. It only hurts for a second.

Bright Eyes/Son, Ambulance • *Oh, Holy Fools* • Saddle Creek • It is a bold statement, but I dare say that Conor Oberst (from Bright Eyes) is a candidate for best poet/songwriter to emerge since Dylan. I make this hefty assumption after hearing the disturbingly heartfelt and sublime track "Going for the Gold" on the new Bright Eyes/Son, Ambulance split CD. The second song (of eight total) on the split and the first by Bright Eyes, it only took one listen for me to realize that Oberst is something rare. This guy is legitimate, a true poet laureate and songwriter supreme. The Son, Ambulance songs are great as well but they are merely stars outshone by a brilliant shining sun.

Butches • 3 • Mr. Lady Records • This North Carolina trio focuses on "Queercore," which is really not so much a style of music, but rather a way to let the audience know that they are proud to be lesbians. If this bothers you, that's too bad, since the music is quite good. They blend strong guitars with emotional singing courtesy of Alison Martlew, formerly of Team Dresch.

Canyon • self-titled • Slowdime Records • Canyon create an ethereal atmosphere in their music, evoking Pink Floyd's trippy sound, but with less audio effects or flying pigs. They do add some keyboards, accordion and harmonica which create a southern feel. The heavily echoed singing is almost whiny, making this CD perfect for a rainy afternoon.

CO2 • *First Time Around* • Splivey Cool Entertainment • If someone played this for me without knowing who it was, I'd think that Pearl Jam joined up with Living Colour for some Millennium Crap tour. While this isn't awful, it's

also not great and not very original.

Crispus Attucks • *The First Album* • Soda Jerk Records • Originally released in the Summer of 1998, this album quickly went out of print and demand has called for its re-release. This version has been re-mixed, re-mastered and re-packaged. It's 13 tracks of aggressive hardcore with a socio-political message that combines the rapid-fire old-school attitude with the tempo changes and breakdowns of new school hardcore. (Ahh, what a lovely mix.)

Dashboard Confessional • *The Places You Have Come to Fear the Most* • Vagrant • Leaving behind his emo-core aggressions, Chris Carrabba (ex-Further Seems Forever and Vacant Andys) has put forth his second solo album. Using emotionally charged vocals and lyrics, Carrabba captures the listener with beautifully orchestrated tunes. Combining emo with acoustic music is nothing new, but Carrabba does it better than anyone out there. The vocal melodies are supported by infectious guitar work and drumming that will have your toes tapping along immediately.

Denison Witmer • *The '80s EP* • Burnt Toast Vinyl • Witmer is a singer-songwriter from Philadelphia with sincere vocals and a good musical backing. This is definitely radio-digestible material. His style is acoustic-based and pop-oriented. *The '80s EP* is a seven-track offering that includes two versions of the title track and five other new tunes.

Diecast • *Day of Reckoning* • Now or Never Records • You've got 10 cuts of ear-splitting hardcore/metalcore here. Diecast has been on the Boston hardcore scene for nearly five years now and have made a big name for themselves in the Northeast. Relying on their brand of relentless breakdowns and vocal hooks, they are poised to make a name for themselves everywhere they go.

Diesel Boy • *Rode Hard And Put Away Wet* • Honest Don's • Usually, and unfortunately, I can think of several bands with whom to compare a band I am reviewing. It is great to be able to say that these guys don't sound too much like any band I've heard (at least recently). This is pop-punk that stretches the boundaries of the genre so that it includes more than the standard issue tried-and-true catches and riffs.

xDisciplex A.D. • *Heaven and Hell* • Triple Crown Records • Wow! A hard pounding Christian Straight Edge Hardcore Metal release! If you're in the need for a positive message that isn't preachy and you're a fan of metallic hardcore and death metal, definitely pick this up. Though I enjoyed reading the lyrics, I'm not a huge fan of metallic hardcore so I didn't get into the music much. The artwork inside is very cool, so check it out on the record.

Dr. Know • *Habilly What Was Old Is New* • Cleopatra • This features 14 songs of old-school punk that will have you kicking someone's teeth in by the third song. These guys have been around in various incarnations since the early '80s spreading their fueled-up, ass-kicking variety of punk. I strongly suspect that these guys had a big influence on Guttermouth's sound. Fast, short songs that make their point and shut up.

Dryspell • *Kitty Porn* • III Legal Records • Hailing from Arizona by way of San Francisco, Dryspell creates its own style of Power-Pop blended with Alternative, with buzzing guitars and melodic vocals. When John Morris sings the high notes, he sounds like the lead singer for the 1980's one (or two) hit wonder the Outfield. Even though most of the tracks on *Kitty Porn* are drenched in energy, the guys find the time to calm things down and do a couple of slow songs.

dZihan & Kamien • *Refreaked* • Six Degrees Records • Being remixers themselves, dZihan and Kamien decided to turn over the tracks for their last release, *Freaks and Icons*, to some qualified producers, so that they could rework them as they pleased. The result is *Refreaked*, a collection of 10 different remixes of nine different songs, with "Smile" being the only one that appears as two different versions. The vibe from the original songs is intact, but the remixes are different enough so you don't think that you are listening to the original songs. Deep House, Downtempo, Dub and even a bit of Drum 'N Bass are all present, with some Eastern samples thrown in. If you enjoyed *Freaks and Icons*, you should definitely check *Refreaked* out.

Edie Sedgwick • *First Reflections* • Dischord/Mud Memory

Records • Edie Sedgwick is a drum and bass duo. No, not the electronic music genre characterized by sped up hip hop beats, but rather two guys who play a drum kit and a bass, plus some singing. All tracks act as tribute to actors, with titles like "Faye Dunaway," "Sean Connery" or "Hilary Swank." The music is very free-form at times, mostly frenetic, fusing a bit of punk attitude into the mix. There is more to these songs than just the music, so you have to pay attention to the details to get the whole experience.

Eighteen Visions • *Until the Ink Runs Out* • Trustkill Records • A new hardcore sound? You bet. Eighteen Visions sound just a bit different but there's no mistaking the energy they put out. I think it's mainly from the distorted bass sound they get. Whatever it is, it's working and people in Orange County, CA already know it.

El Guapo • *The Geography of Dissolution* • Mud Memory Records • One word describes El Guapo...experimental. This is the kind of music that some people listen to because they know everyone else in the world will dismiss it as random noises made with accordion, glockenspiel, guitar, drums and horns. That way, they can pretend to be cooler than everyone else. I don't mind improvisational free-form (Storm and Stress comes to mind), but this was a bit too much for me. You can forget about me trying to describe the music, since it is impossible. You'll have to check it out for yourself. Oh, by the way, this CD was recorded live during two different performances. The crowd sounds like they enjoyed the show.

Ester Drang • *Goldenwest* • Burnt Toast Vinyl • If you enjoy spacey, ethereal music that is mostly instrumental, then *Goldenwest* is for you. Like All Natural Lemon and Lime Flavors, the members of Ester Drang create soundscapes with their instruments, lulling you into a state of conscious hypnosis. The vocals are smooth and heavily reverbbed, further contributing to the state of beautiful limbo. It is suggested that the listener not operate heavy machinery while listening to this album!

Fabulous Disaster • *Put Out Or Get Out* • Pink & Black Records • These four leather clad chicks from San Francisco give the impression of being rough and tough. After all, they have the piercings and the tattoos. They also have talent. Their songs are melodic punk chock full of amazing harmonies and layered vocals. Even though they are not breaking new ground here, it's good to see more all-girl bands getting exposure and respect.

Face to Face • *Standards and Practices* • Vagrant Recordings • For this, their latest release, Face to Face decided to make "the ultimate mix tape." Each band member chose a couple of songs that had influenced them and then recorded those songs, trying to come as close to the original version, while adding a punk touch. The songs include "What Difference Does it Make?" (The Smiths), "Don't Change" (INXS), "Planet of Sound" (Pixies), "The KKK Took My Baby Away" (Ramones), "Merchandise" (Fugazi) and "That's Entertainment" (The Jam). Forget those 80's compilations they sell on TV, get *Standards and Practices* instead.

Fairweather • *If They Move...Kill Them* • Equal Vision Records • Suh-weeet! This is the kind of band that you'd see open for your favorite band. Then, after the show you'd talk about Fairweather more than the headliner. The first thing you'll notice is the sound. Not only THEIR sound, but THE sound. This sounds like it was produced by a 20-year veteran. The songs themselves are an energetic, hook-filled mix of emo-core and punk. The tunes are intense, yet they never lose their rhythm and Jay's voice stays consistent throughout. There are some really nice melodies on here, too. It's hard to believe the band is barely more than a year old. This is their first full-length CD and I can only hope there will be many more to follow.

Fauna Flash • *Fusion* • Compost Records • Three years after their debut album *Aquarius* hit the Drum 'N Bass scene, Flash Fusion return with their follow up, *Fusion*. The first track, "Mother Nature," is not what you'd expect from this duo from Munich. It is in fact a dub song, complete with Rasta sounding vocals. Next up is "Percussion," a heavily Latinized track which was written as a tribute to the now late King of the Timbales, Tito Puente. It is on track three "Free," where the sound you know as Drum 'N Bass comes in. Instead of the hard and heavy repetitions of, say, Photek, they instead add jazz elements, such as Hammond organs and laid back saxo-

★ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ★

phone interludes, to make their sound more accessible and enjoyable. "Alone Again" and "Ten" veer off into House territory, complemented by waves of synthesized sound. "Referee" features a frenetic breakbeat, also surrounded by jazzy instrumentation and a heavily echoed and unrecognizable vocal sample, while the last track, "Question," features rapping by the Aphrodelics. As you can see, Fauna Flash is not afraid to experiment with different styles in the Electronic music scene, instead of pigeonholing themselves into one genre.

Film School • *Brilliant Career* • **Metool Records** • You'd never know it, but Film School's members rotate instruments often. But they are firmly anchored by the band's founder and songwriter, Krag Burton. Their songs layer guitars and keyboards effortlessly, and range from slow to medium tempo. Guest players include Pavement's Scott Kannberg, Fuck's Kyle Statham and Glitter Mini 9's Mauri Skinfil.

Fireside • *Hello Kids* • **Crank! Records** • *Hello Kids* starts out with a beautiful xylophone and reverbed guitars on "Beautiful Island, Ugly Natives," which builds intensity as it goes on. It releases its built up energy on "Silver Muscle Car," and pretty much keeps the pace throughout this massive 71 minute collection of unreleased tracks, b-sides and other rare stuff, including some tracks previously available only on vinyl. This Swiss quartet injects punk style into hard rock/metal, yet are not afraid to experiment with keyboards and vibes.

Frank Black and the Catholics • *Dog in the Sand* • **What Are Records?** • No, the Pixies are not getting back together. Frank Black simply asked his former bandmate Joey Santiago to play guitar on a couple of songs. Three songs to be exact. And this album is no tribute to his 1980's job as frontman for the legendary Pixies. It is somewhat of a collection of songs that represent American music. It was recorded live on a 2-track, achieving a live atmosphere. "Blast Off" is a lively rocker with Eric Feldman adding a touch of Billy Joel with piano licks. Morris Tepper contributes with some banjo playing in "St. Francis Dam Disaster," which also features a steel pedal guitar. "Bullet" might as well be sung by Johnny Cash. But by far the most interesting song is "Stupid Me," which sounds like it belongs on an oldies station, with Black singing way too high.

Fred Everything • *Under the Sun* • **Turbo Records** • Even though Fred Everything has been involved with the electronica scene for a few years, he is only now releasing his debut album. The wait will have been worth it for fans of House music. This CD incorporates flowing samples of a few styles, like Latin and Funk, held up by groovy bass lines and repetitive yet inventive drum breaks.

Frenzal Rhomb • *Shut Your Mouth* • **Fat Wreck Chords** • Straight from the Outback of Australia come Frenzal Rhomb. Their take on melodic pop punk is fast and catchy. Even though it's been a while since their last release, due to the lead singer's health problems, they sound like they never missed a beat. 16 tracks of adrenaline fueled punk with a tinge of hardcore in a few tracks.

Frodus • *And We Washed Our Weapons In The Sea* • **Fueled by Ramen Records** • When I popped in this CD, the killer bass line on "Red Bull of Juarez" began, and the screaming vocals thundered, and I thought to myself... "Ok, another hardcore record." Then "The Earth Isn't Humming" came in and I thought... "Wow, this guy is singing now, and the guitars aren't totally distorted. This must be an Indie/Post Punk record." Then "There Will Be No More Scum" brought its Soundgarden style guitar riff and I thought... "Ok, maybe this is some kind of grunge/emo record." "Belgian Congo" is an instrumental ballad, and "Hull Crush Depth" features a programmed drum loop. I think you get the picture. Although the predominant feel is toward hardcore, you would be hard pressed to categorize Frodus, so don't even try it. Suffice it to say that they kick ass, no matter what kind of music they decide to play.

Gorky's Zygotic Mynci • *The Blue Trees* • **Mantra Recordings** • Judging the name of this band, you'd never guess that Gorky's Zygotic Mynci is a Welsh band. You'd probably imagine they are Russian. By listening to the music, however, you'd probably think they are American, since their music is completely acoustic and shares elements with 60's era folk music. Smooth guitars and soothing vocals (all in English) will have you

thinking about the days of peace and love.

Greg Howard Band • *Lift* • **Espresso Records** • Greg Howard is one of the few full time Chapman Stick players around. This remarkable instrument is based on a guitar, but is played by tapping the strings, instead of plucking them, allowing the user to play two separate parts at the same time, one with each hand. Incorporating this instrument as the centerpiece for his band, Greg Howard focuses on adult contemporary fare, instrumental and jazzy compositions whose polished style is reminiscent of Special EFX. But don't be discouraged if you're fearful of adult contemporary. The sounds created by the Chapman Stick deserve to be checked out.

Groove Armada • *Live* • **Jive Electro Records** • Fans of Groove Armada's mixture of live instrumentation with DJ samples will really like this CD. It features live recordings and rehearsal outtakes that lean on the jazzy side and emphasize the live aspect. This is not really a dance record. It is more appropriate for driving with the top down on a beachfront avenue.

Hollydrift • *Hail The Frozen North* • **self-released** • Hollydrift is one dude, Mathias Anderson. He blends aural atmospheres with found and other sound sources and makes "soundscapes with heart." This is a three-song EP and it's quite interesting.

Idle Hands • *Building a Desert* • **Trustkill Records** • Wow!!! Now this is new to me. This is like emo-core with one huge difference: Meaghan Ball on vocals. This really floored me. Her voice is incredible and it's not lost at all in the music. And, the great part, she keeps up (and then some) without having to scream. She reminds me at times of the chick from The Cranberries. What's her name? Who cares. What really matters is that this is a band with rarely seen blend of huge riffs and beats, and a very sweet voice carrying through. "Behind My Back" is amazing, as is "Popular" (great melodies) and "Home of the Hits."

Jesper Dahlbäck • *Stockholm Mix Sessions* • **Turbo Recordings** • Turbo Recordings decided to let Jasper Dahlbäck produce his own continuous compilation CD after contributing a few well received tracks to the Montreal Mix Sessions Volumes 1 and 2. This mix features jazzy House and Techno music from Blue 6, Isolee, Gemini Sounds and the Rurals, as well as his own under the moniker the Persuader. The beat is non-stop, the bass lines are heavy, and there is plenty of Latin percussion and some female vocals, even some flamenco guitars are mixed in on "Off the Beaten Path," by Solaris Heights.

JJ Nobody and the Regulars • *Rock 'n' Roll Doesn't End at 2:00* • **Hopeless Records** • Do you like the Nobodys? Well, this is frontman JJ in full effect. The music is beer-fueled rock and roll with a driving energy and punk attitude. Don't expect wildly creative song instrumentation or kooky tempo changes; do expect to have a rocking good time.

Joi Veer • *On* • **self-released** • Strong on influence from U2, Peter Gabriel, John Lennon, and Pearl Jam, this debut album features a great array of inspired songwriting that is extremely fluid. Gentle guitars and soft percussion rhythms bubble softly underneath Veer's flawless vocals that do nothing short of taking flight. The subjects of his music are human experience, which he uses to render emotional ballads of honesty and conviction.

Jori Hulkonen • *Helsinki Mix Sessions* • **Turbo Recordings** • In yet another installment of the Turbo Recordings Mix Sessions series, this time Helsinki resident Jori Hulkonen takes over the decks. He has compiled 17 continuously mixed tracks by artists whose songs flow between Electro and House, always keeping in mind the decade that was the 1980's. For the first half of the CD there is also a decidedly Brazilian feel to this mix, though not an overt one. The second half slowly strips away this vibe, and evolves into straight House. Perhaps it is the way your hips shake unconsciously while you listen, but there is something special about this mix.

Josh Joplin Group • *Useful Music* • **Artemis Records** • No. The answer to your question is no. Josh is not the son of the late Janis Joplin. He's not related to her at all. Yet it wouldn't be surprising if they were as Josh is a spirited, gifted musician, too. I first heard the JJJ on the Aware compilation CD's. That's where I also heard Shawn Mullins for the first time, who, coincidentally, co-produced *Useful Music* with ex-Talking Head Jerry

Harrison. The music itself is a simple blend of guitars, bass and drums, playing in perfect time with Joplin's honest, witty lyrics. This is a refreshing break from the corporate rock on the radio today. Fans of R.E.M. and Mullins will eat this with a big spoon.

Keepsake • *The End of Sound* • **Eulogy Records** • Here's my advice: If you're listening to a CD before you buy it, DON'T buy (or not buy) based on the first song. Keepsake's first song is flat-out hardcore, but the rest of the CD hangs around in an emo-core/punk vein. They do some acoustic work on here, too. I totally dig the music and the pictures in the liner notes are great.

Kevin Seconds • *Heaven's Near Wherever You Are* • **Headhunter Records** • No, this isn't a typo. It really is Kevin Seconds. It IS the same guy you've grown to love from 7 Seconds. This is by NO means a 7 Seconds record though. Kevin has produced a very well written and edgy pop CD here. You'll think of Elvis Costello and Mark Bolan when you listen. It's a true compliment to him as a musician when he can be just as effective screaming and jumping around as he can be standing in front of a microphone with an acoustic guitar around his neck. Very impressive.

Kind of Like Spitting & Jeff London • *Home: Volume 1* • **Post-Pario Records** • It's open mike night in somebody's living room. Woohoo! You know how open mike night's work. Few songs are actually worth two pennies. Most songs are mediocre at best. The four songs on this EP - two from Kind of Like Spitting and two from Jeff London - aren't bad songs. In fact, they're nice, melodic, acoustic tunes with heartfelt lyrics. This, however, doesn't take away the fact that it's open mike night in somebody's living room. Woohoo!

Kind of Like Spitting • *One Hundred Dollar Bill* • **OHEV Records** • I'm not sure where the name came from but I don't feel like spitting at all. Actually, I feel like scoring some weed and listening to this again. This is emo-pop, a la Hayden. They sometimes play around with the songs and add an element of noise pop but it's all good and mellow. Groooovy.

King Britt Presents Sylk 130 • *Happiness EP* • **Six Degrees Records** • "Happiness" is the first single from Sylk 130's *Re-Members Only*, an album that is a tribute to pre-disco funk music. There are four versions of the song, including the album version plus three remixes by Soul Dhamma, Critical Point and King Britt himself.

Lafleche • *Montreal Mix Sessions, Vol. 4* • **Turbo Recordings** • For his second installment of the successful Montreal Mix Sessions, Lafleche assembled tracks from Young & Vincenzini, Jamie Anderson, Dahlback and Krome, Bert Dunk and Paranoid Jack, among others in a continuous mix of Hard House tracks. The relentless thump of the beat will surely damage your speakers if you are not careful.

LandSpeedRecord! • *Road to Flight* • **Resin Records** • Since 1996, LandSpeedRecord! have been recording eclectic and slightly weird songs. *Road to Flight* is no exception, with Charles Jamison's lyrics as dark and humorous as ever. What in the world does he mean by "Stare into the bleeding heart of cement / How does it bleed?" or "I can barely write to someone without being buried alive in their back yard." It probably doesn't matter. Just enjoy the music.

Leatherface • *The Last* • **BYO Records** • The story on this release is rather confusing. In 1993, Leatherface decided they were going to break up, which they did. (They also got back together and are currently touring.) Right around that time, they had just finished recording *The Last*. Years passed and singer Frankie Stubbs formed a three-piece called Pope, and recorded some songs with them. This year, BYO decided to release *The Last*, but also decided to include 8 tracks by Pope, for a total of 16 tracks. Beside the band member's names, Pope is not mentioned anywhere on this record, and you probably couldn't tell the difference between the two bands, anyway. Both are fronted by Frankie Stubbs's gritty, smoked-too-many-cigarettes voice, and both feature a blend of Punk and Heavy Metal that kicks ass.

Little Champions • *Transactions + Replications* • **Barsuk Records** • Seattle's Little Champions are an unusual, fun, hyper, poppy, indie rock band. The approach is subtle, not in your face. The melodies are strong, sensitive aspects of the musical landscape. The female vocals are not my favorite, a little too overdone for me.

★ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ★

But the creative sounds used are quite interesting.

LTJ Bukem • *Producer 01* • Good Looking Records • This recording can be described as a "Greatest Hits" collection, with nine of LTJ Bukem's favorite tracks from his career as a Drum N' Bass producer. Strangely enough, some tracks don't really fit well into what you would consider D N' B by today's standards. Take "Cosmic Interlude," a rather jazzy track with an upbeat tempo, but not a high bpm rate. Same goes for "Constellation," which is actually a hip-hop track with a lazy beat and rapping. "Coolin' Out," "Music" and "Demons Theme" fit better into the genre, with heavy bass lines and rapid fire drum beats. One thing all the tracks have in common is length, all being between six and ten minutes long!

Madcap • *Stand Your Ground* • Side One Dummy Records • Hell yeah! Another awesome, REAL punk disc. I'd go see these guys play in their garage every weekend. There are 12 great songs on here. The music is aggressive but simple and the harmonies (screaming, they may be) are a brilliant touch.

Mark Kozelek • *What's Next to the Moon* • Badman Recording Co. • Remember the Red House Painters? You know, they had that whole slow, melancholy rock thing going on, that made feeling sad feel kinda good. Anywho, this is the first solo effort from their lead singer Mark Kozelek. Kozelek has taken ten AC/DC tunes and stripped them down to the basics: just acoustic guitar and vocals. The song selection is interesting as well; these aren't the songs that pot smokin', domestic beer swiggin' types are grunting along to at the AC/DC rock spectacle coming soon to a major sports arena near you. No, these are lesser-known songs from the Bon Scott era that don't have quite the baggage of their more popular material. Kozelek's sparse arrangements and subtle vocals add, or perhaps reveal, depth to these simple tales. Check out his great take on the "Thunder from Down Under".

MC Conrad • *Logical Progression Level 4* • Good Looking Records • For the fourth installment of the *Logical Progression* series, MC Conrad takes over both the composer and MC roles to deliver this three CD release. The first disc features Conrad, backed up by Fuze, a four piece band that brings some warmth into the recording without sacrificing the rapid fire pace of the Drum N' Bass sound. Disc two is a collection of tracks compiled by LTJ Bukem, featuring Big Bud, Nookie, Nu Moon and Intersperse. Finally, disc three, which is only available on a limited number of copies of the album, features remixes of the songs on disc one by the likes of Blame, Makoto, Rantoul and PFM. Each disc totals about 70 minutes of solid Drum N' Bass, so prepare to dedicate some time to listen to the whole set.

MC Conrad • *Vocalist 01* • Good Looking Records • By the title of this CD, you can tell that vocals are very important to MC Conrad. For that reason, he picked nine tracks by Drum N' Bass artists such as PFM, Blame, Axis, Big Bud and Seba, and re-recorded the vocal tracks to update them and generally make them stand out more. His style is not a constant barrage of lyrics, but rather sporadic spurts of rhymes with somewhat of a Jamaican accent, while heavy on the reverb. This allows you to enjoy the tracks and makes them suitable for any DJ's set.

O.H.S. • *self-titled* • self-released • I don't know what it stands for so let me take a shot: rOckin Heavy Stuff. How's that? This is back-to-basics metal. There's not a trace of Limp or Korn on here, thank you. Fans of Corrosion of Conformity will want to marry this band. There are only four songs and that's a damned shame. I wanted to hear more and keep my neck on a swivel.

On the Might of Princes • *Where You Are and Where You Want to Be* • Creep Records • On the Might of Princes takes all the sonic fragments of the DIY music scene – emo, screamo, and indie – and stitches them together with amazing lyrics to create a defining record. Some might say at this point in time, it's too much to expect someone to do something original. However, On the Might of Princes filter their influences and life experiences to create a powerful listening experience you'll hear and feel, giving you a shiver down your spine.

OPE aka O-Asiatic • *Get Shorty!* • OPE Entertainment • Big props to OPE for taking care of his own shit, releasing his own records and making things happen on his terms – and doing it better than those major label creeps. The intro skit is a hilarious rip on all those fake-ass thugs

rhyming about bullshit ghetto life. From there things take off. OPE's flow is intense, so you better invest in this disc. "Get Shorty" is a 40-minute tour of hardcore rhymes, addictive beats, samples and creative loops. "I riverdance all over your face!" – now that's some rugged, real-ass speech. OPE comes tough, but he shows his intelligence and ability to mix in humor is more important than how big he can flex.

Phantom Patient • *Songs From Downstairs* • Entartete Kunst Records • *Songs From Downstairs* is supposed to be a mind excursion, and can best be described as minimalist trip hop. Most tracks revolve around a lazy beat with a few samples thrown in, and vocals run through an effect machine. The lead vocalist has a heavy Scottish accent, which is hard to understand at times. There is a lo-fi feeling that permeates this record, either because it was intended or because there was a lack of money.

Phoenicia • *Brownout* • Schematic Music Company • Phoenicia is lethargically moving across the fine line between ambient and downtempo with *Brownout*. This glitch and beep fest has, at times, regularly scheduled noises that could serve as beats, similar to Mouse on Mars' upbeat sound, and at others it just has waves of sounds that come and go. This is definitely an album for fans of Aphex Twin's more ambient stuff, or some of Squarepusher's slower tracks. Listen to it if you need to relax. Its slow pace will set you right at ease.

Pinkerton Thugs • *End Of An Era* • Go-Kart • Pinkerton Thugs hails from up here in the Northeast where they know how to rock, motherfucker. This is punk anthem heaven. The Pinkerton Thugs play old-school pop punk (is there such a thing?) with melodic overtones that hook you from the first chord and don't let up. Just the right mix of ferocity and fun make this disc a very important addition to your collection. This is sort of like Sloppy Seconds meets Kiss meets James Taylor. Go figure.

Proletarian Art Threat • *self-titled EP* • Lean Enterprise Recordings • Part audio art display, part aural assault, PAT is as politically proactive lyrically as they are noisy. This is in-your-face rock with a lot of feedback, heavy riffs, and wandering/squealing guitar pollution (the kind that's good for your health). The vocals are delivered in one of two ways: screamed or spoken. Singing just isn't part of PAT's plan for world domination. And it serves no place in their already perfectly structured anti-establishment rock and noise orchestra. I imagine a lot of flailing during their live shows. Join the good fight: www.proletarianarthreat.com

Pushover • *Logic & Loss* • Asian Man Records • This quintet specializes in pop and melodic punk music, with harmonic vocals. Tracks like "Tell Me Why" and "Till Tomorrow" feature chugging guitar riffs that layer on top of each other. "Go Boy" and "Little Faith" are some of the few tracks that feature horns which add a touch of ska. "Home," a poppy nostalgic song, ends the album in a decidedly non-punk way. Pushover strikes a balance between the pop and punk elements in their music, making *Logic & Loss* well worth checking out.

Ran Away to Sea • *I Won't Tell a Soul Except the World* • Burnt Toast Vinyl • This CD is the collaboration of four Lancaster, PA rockers. There's no question, you can file this under "emo". With a sound akin to Jimmy Eat World and Cursive, Ran Away to Sea (RAS) joins an already crowded scene. They aren't breaking new ground with

this ten-track album, but they're sure to gain new fans with the well produced and, for the most part, rocking release. However, the vocals waver (he sometimes seems unsure of himself – which can work, but not for me), the ballads are too dramatic and I wish they would leave keyboards out of a few tracks.

Right Brigade • *Right Brigade* •

Revelation Records • These guys are really pissed off at this person named "you." This is perhaps the angriest hardcore record I've heard in a long time. Heck, they even steal a riff from Suicidal Tendencies on "F T K." If you are young (or old), pissed off at your friends, life, world, parents, this will serve as very necessary therapy for you. The music is great hardcore, and you have to admire Right Brigade for expressing their vulnerability and not posturing as tough guys. They do some muscling grinds that are amazing on "Falling Down" and "Waste of Breath."

Rocket from the Crypt • *Group Sounds* • Vagrant Records • 2000 was a rather tumultuous year for RFCTC. They were dropped from Interscope, and their drummer quit the band. Did they let this stop them? No. They immediately signed with Vagrant and enlisted the one armed wonder that is Mario Rubalcaba (Black Heart Procession, Clikitat Ikatowi) and charged ahead. *Group Sounds* is not much of a departure from the sound of their previous eight records. The fuzzy, churning guitars are as explosive as ever, and the singing is just as throaty. One evident change is the diminished presence of the horn section. Each song packs quite a wallop, sure to annoy your neighbors, so play it loud!

Rose of Sharon • *Even the Air is Out of Tune* • Espo Records • The increasing availability of CD burners to the mass populace isn't necessarily a good thing. Nowadays, it seems young bands are putting out discs before they figure out how to tune their instruments, not to mention write a decent song. Fortunately, this isn't the case with Rose of Sharon, who've honed their craft over the past four years. The Boston trio has cultivated a sound that is reminiscent of early Versus. Dave Auchenbach's production captures all the subtle nuances of the richly textured indie pop. If they keep writing quality songs like this, they can burn all the CD's they want with my blessing.

Rydell • *Per Ardua Ad Astra* • Headhunter Records • Rydell is an English emo-rock band that has toured the UK and Europe extensively. They're now bringing their brand of powerful and melodic emo to the states. They're actually better known for their hardcore shows but have switched gears this time and pulled it off quite nicely.

Sepultura • *Nation* • Roadrunner Records • Many thought that Sepultura would be over with after Max Cavalera departed as lead singer to form Soulfly. Instead, they recruited Derrick Green and kept going, recording *Against* and now *Nation*. The band's sound has matured, as evident in "Water," where Green actually sings, sounding like Red Hot Chili Pepper Anthony Kiedis. Or in "Valtio," which actually features the rather beautiful Finnish string quartet Apocalyptica as backup. Not that they have wimped out. In fact, "Revolt" is one of the most intense songs I have heard from these guys in a while. Their spirit of collaboration is as alive as ever, enlisting former Dead Kennedys frontman Jello Biafra and Hatebreed's vocalist Jamey Jasta as guest stars, among other artists.

Shadowyze • *Spirit Warrior* • SOAR Co. • Native American hip-hop is not the easiest thing to find. But the music that has been the musical voice of America's minorities for over 20 years now has a voice for Native Americans worldwide. The political and social awareness featured on this CD is powerful. It's a shame that this kind of pro-active lyricism isn't more present throughout

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hip-hop. Shadowyze is a solid vocalist, delivering his rhymes on point with both a ruggedness and a bounce. The beats are not groundbreaking, but they are well-produced with a strong dance aspect as well as combining elements of techno and some Native sounds.

Shamra • Shamra • Shamra Music • When I read their press release and saw "exotic pop/alternative" music, I got really nervous. However, that's about as on the money as you can get. They definitely play pop/alternative music and, thanks to lead singer Carrie Bolger's voice, it does have an exotic air. The music is tight, her voice is entrancing and their songs have meaningful lyrics. This is a six-song EP and a great taste of what the band is capable of.

Sig Transit Gloria • self-titled • Johann's Face Records

• Sig Transit Gloria's debut is full of energy, like they couldn't wait to get into the studio to record. The CD should be listened to while driving way too fast down a curvy road. Their catchy melodies and rapid-fire guitars make this an exciting Pop Punk release, with an added touch of keyboards.

Six Reasons to Kill • Kiss the Demon • Alveran Records

• These guys sound like they don't need any reason to kill...they can go off any time. Their sound is chaotic, with Christian Walk's guttural voice screaming out indecipherable lyrics. Thankfully, they printed the lyrics. The machine gun drums and hardcore-meets-metal guitars keep up the merciless attack on your hearing for the entire recording. Enjoy!

Sixer • Saving Grace • TKO Records • Sixer is another anthem-loving punk rock band from Richmond, VA. Add them to the list that includes Avail and Ann Beretta. Sixer pulls its influences from the likes of Rancid and Social Distortion. Gruff vocals, hearty American melodies and a boot-stomping beat keep the 12 tracks of this release repeating in my head.

Sloe • Inexact Replica • Sessions Records • Sloe charges right out of the gate in *Inexact Replica*, with songs that are energetic and catchy. Melodic punk is accentuated with guitars that are on the heavier side, and vocal harmonies balance out the tracks. You could compare them to the Ataris, but with breaks in their songs for the singer to take center stage, and give the guitars a rest.

Solid for Sixty • The Secret of Magnets • Record Cellar

• This is a very refreshing album of great, 60-watt, unpretentious rock n' roll. The music tastes like the little bear's porridge – not too hot, not too cold, just right. It features "Jagger-esque" vocals, and a two guitar, bass, drums, and keyboard lineup. It really works on many levels... it's polished, very charming, and full of character.

Son of Sam • Songs from the Earth • Nitro Records • Son of Sam is a collaboration between AFI singer Davey Havok, Danzig guitarist Todd Youth, Samhain / Tiger Army drummer London May and Samhain drummer Steve Zing playing bass. You can probably imagine what the music sounds like. Replace Havok with Glenn Danzig, and you have his next album. Some Misfits influences creep in, like on "Stray," which is full of "Whooooo" shouts, just like on any (old) Misfits record. Havok seems a bit out of place, since his voice is higher pitched than Danzig's, who by the way, performs his first ever guest appearance on one track. Nonetheless, this is an interesting record that you should check out if you are into any band Glenn Danzig has ever played in.

Southport • Nothing Is Easy • Go-Kart • Comprising original members of Snuff, you might expect some seriously wonderful music here. You would be disappointed, however. There is nothing terrible about this disc, but it doesn't have anything that makes it stay on the top of your heavy-rotation playlist either. It is rock-oriented pop with a hard edge. It sounds like the kind of disc that will do very well in the college radio domain.

Terminal 4 • self-titled • Truckstop Records • This is a rather unusual CD, certainly meant for those a bit on the adventurous side. Cello, bass, trombone and guitars are combined to form a beautiful, yet melancholic sound that is hard to get around, even in the more peppy songs. Blame it on the cello, the centerpiece to the group founded by Fred Lonberg-Holm. Even though it is not featured prominently on every track, it serves as the backbone for the songs, which tend to take some twists and turns into improvisation land.

Terry Callier • Alive • Mr. Bongo Recordings • Alive is a

wonderful recording of Folk-Jazz artist Terry Callier in concert, which is where he thrives as a musician. His voice has the capability to soothe the listener, as he does in the happy-go-lucky "Ordinary Joe," or to inspire thought and serenity, as in "Lament for the Late AD," a song where he recounts the events after the tragic killing of Amadou Diallo by New York City police. The beauty of a live recording is that the musicians can feel free to improvise and take the songs in new directions that would prove difficult in a studio. This CD is definitely a must buy for any fans of Jazz music or Adult Contemporary radio.

The (International) Noise Conspiracy • Smash It Up EP • Big Wheel Recreation

• This CD EP features the single "Smash It Up" from The (International) Noise Conspiracy's last manifesto, *Survival Sickness*. It's a catchy song with a groovy beat and revolutionary lyrics. The enhanced portion of the CD features the video, which is drenched in reds and grays, suggesting Communism, just like the messages that appear on the screen. Two other songs are included in the CD, with the overall sound coming close to the Delta 72's mix of Blues and Rock. *Viva la Revolución!*

The And/Ors • Will Self Destruct • Better Looking Records

• Born from the songwriting and four track recordings of Daniel Black, the And/Ors have quickly grown into a full-fledged band. The fourteen scuffed up, garage pop gems are perfectly rough around the edges. There is a great chemistry between the musicians, as the energy level and interplay are tight throughout. In addition to her solid bass work, Arabella Harrison, formerly of Jejune, adds great backing vocals that complement Black's voice quite well. Let's just hope that the album title isn't some sort of omen.

The Animatronics • 2000: the year of the future • Morphius Records

• Hey, you got your Devo in my Man or Astroman. Hey, you got your Man or Astroman in my Devo. If that has been your chant for the last few years, then you're in luck. Here come the Animatronics to save your day. I loved this CD. The Animatronics claim to be androids created by the Toidinami Corporation. I don't care who created them, this is great. The Animatronics kick ass with a great new wave punk sound and excellently entertaining lyrics.

The Berlin Project • The Transition Radio EP • Try Again Records

• This punk/ska band from Pennsylvania knows how to keep you up and moving. They have an amazing energy that must be absolutely draining in concert. This is Less Than Jake minus the big bucks and polish. Fans of The Clash, Operation Ivy and Reel Big Fish will dig it.

The Deep Eynds • Suicide Drive EP • Black Cabaret Records

• Overall, a solid record. It's kind of a pop-punk thing. It's not quite punk, but it's definitely not pop. The music is really tight and the singer's voice is very original. The songs are definitely themed – "Dead Alive," "Superstition," "Deep Dark Secret," so you folks who dress in black every day, all day, will love this.

The Devil in Black • resistance is fertile • Ribonucleic Records

• Remember that Meat Beat Manifesto offshoot Consolidated? If you don't, Consolidated was electronic hip-hop with a message. There was very little middle ground with them. You either loved it or hated it. I loved it. How does this connect to The Devil in Black (DIB)? Well, DIB (AKA Eric Piotrowski) is electronic hip-hop with a message. I wanted to like DIB, but the majority of the lyrics come off as hokey and the production is non-existent. This is truly a hip-hop tragedy.

The Donnas • The Donnas Turn 21 • Lookout! Records

• Like the title suggests, the Donnas are now old enough to order their drinks legally. And with that age comes maturity. Which means that the Ramones punk song structure that characterized their debut album *American Teenage Rock N' Roll Machine* has given way to a straight up rock and roll style. What it does not mean is that they have lost their girl-power attitude. Just about every song on *The Donnas Turn 21* has to do with getting laid and not being shy about it. Think of it this way...if a guy sang lyrics like "I'll let you flip my flipper / if you let me unzip your zipper" and "Don't you know that I can't be treated like a toy / 'Cause that's for me to do to you" he'd be accused of sexism. The Donnas sing them, and they don't give a rat's ass who doesn't like it.

The Explosion • Flash Flash Flash • Jade Tree • The first full-length by The Explosion is a surprising change-around

from their past EPs. Melodic and political, you'll be hooked on the first track "No Revolution." The best of punk rock has always transcended the scene and could stand on its own terms as rock-n-roll. The Explosion fuses melody and aggression without sacrificing either, creating a sound more distinct (thanks to the melodies) than the punk rock of their prior releases. If you like Dillinger Four, give this a listen.

The Foxymorons • Rodeo City • American Pop Project

• Remember when you needed five other guys to form a band? Screw that. Two guys here. They pull it off without a hitch, too. The singing reminds me a lot of Son Volt but not the music. They're much more upbeat, almost a power pop thing, with all kinds of sounds to spice it up. Maybe they'd like to be a trio...

The Great Deceiver • Jet Black Art • Trustkill Records

• Real fans of metal will remember the band At The Gates. The Great Deceiver features ex-Gates vocalist Tomas. Deceiver is more of a metalcore band but delivers the same raw power and bruising riffs that all great metal bands produce. This five-song EP is a good indication of what's to come. They have yet to make it to the States to perform live but when they do, don't miss out!

The Heroine Sheiks • Rape on the Installment Plan • Reptilian Records

• OK, bear with me for a second. This is going to take some thinking. I immediately thought of Morphine when I heard this, even though there is a full compliment of musicians on here. This has a weird but very cool vibe to it. The songs are almost punk, but not really. They're punk because they're so outside the norm. This noise-rock will never be on the radio and that's a damned shame as it's more innovative and interesting than anything out there.

The Lillingtons • The Backchannel Broadcast • Lookout!

• I reviewed their last CD and I liked it. I like this one much more. They are sitting somewhere on the fence between pop-punk like The Queers and spooky stuff like The Misfits, and on that fence is just where they should stay. Sixteen rockin' tracks engineered by Mass Giorgini with help from Ben Weasel on one tune. This is a band that is difficult to compare to others because their sound is different enough to be exciting.

The Mother Hips • Green Hills of Earth • Future Farmer Recordings

• California's The Mother Hips seemed at the beginning of their career to go the path of the neo-hippie jam band. Touring extensively, 300 dates a year, and drawing large crowds, they could very well have remained content with their modest success and continued gigging relentlessly until they achieved a Moe/Widespread Panic modicum of fame. But they cut down on the touring and in '98 released the eccentric, lo-fi, country tinged *Later Days*. Now, with the release of *Green Hills of Earth*, The Mother Hips seem intent on killing the hippie band reputation that has heretofore limited their appeal. *Green Hills* is wandering and playful, with little if any alt-country. Instead the Hips have opted for an experimental yet poppy album comparable to the band Elephant Six.

The Ocean Blue • Davey Jones' Locker • March Records

• Perhaps you remember the Ocean Blue's smash MTV hit "Sublime." These guys from Hershey, PA create pretty Brit Pop songs that have gained them plenty of fans. The central guitar melody of "Ayn" may as well have been lifted from a New Order song, while "Garden Song" actually has the lead singer letting out a series of "Pa pa pa da pa pa pa" sounds. "Denmark" sounds like a New Wave song from 1986, full of harmonies and guitar riffs.

The Oranges Band • 900 Miles of Fucking Hell • Morphius Records

• This five-song EP showcases this band's artsy new-wave pop stylings. They sound at times like the Psychedelic Furs, at times like Devo. It's a welcome change and will remind you of Friday nights in 1982.

The Queers • Today EP • Lookout!

• If you've ever heard The Queers, then you have a darn good idea of what this EP sounds like. They do a scintillating cover of a song that I have heard on my son's Sesame Street CD. This disc is definitely a throwback to their *Lovesongs for the Retarded* album, lacking the ferocity of their most recent full length. Still, I love them and this disc is only disappointing in that it is too short. The full length is due out this fall. Stay tuned...

The Rocking Horse Winner • State of Feeling Con-

★QUICKIES...a little bit on a lot of records★

centration • OHEV Records • Wow. I usually like to listen to female fronted indie bands, but am constantly disappointed by the lack of oomph in their voices. They tend to get drowned out by the backing instruments. This is certainly not the case here. I was blown away by Jolie Lindholm's vocals, which can sound a lot like Lisa Loeb, but better. Harmonies are employed generously to add to her already impressive talent. Not only is she incredible, but the rest of the band is as well. Matt Crum's drumming is flawless, with plenty of beat changes and rolls. Providing the low end is Jeronimo Gomez, whose fat bass lines force you to grab your chest. Finally, Henry Olmino switches between distortion and acoustic guitar, sometimes in mid song, adding flexibility and unexpected twists and turns to the songs. The band members complement each other perfectly, making *State of Feeling Concentration*, if you'll pardon the cliché, a must-get CD.

The Sissies • *Look Back and Laugh* • New Disorder Records • Fun! That's the first thing that came to mind. The songs are good and they have some nice harmony work, but fun is the word here. Kind of like The Donnas in a garage with the singers sharing one mic.

The Stereo • *No Traffic* • Fueled by Ramen Records • Two years after their debut *Three Hundred*, The Stereo is back with the high-energy *No Traffic*. The fact that founding member Rori Philippe left to reunite with his old band did not stop Jamie Woolford from plowing ahead. Their sound is a mix of punk and pop, with plenty of melodies and harmonies. The chorus on "New Tokyo Is Calling" made the hairs on the back of my neck stand on end, while "Please Don't Break My Heart" is both playful and melancholic. (The Stereo, despite rumors, is not breaking up. Jamie is going to be The Stereo on his own, as the other members have moved on.)

The Trouble With Sweeney • *Dear Life* • Burnt Toast Vinyl • Sweeney has created a style all their own, a hybrid of country, indie rock and folk. The music has an indie rock attitude and an aggressive push, but it also captures some of the sentimental feel of folk music along with the musical sounds and styles of country. Lead-singer Joey does a great job of getting your attention and, luckily, the music is good enough to keep you around. This is a marvelous, catchy, poppy new release worth sticking your ears into.

The Way Back • *self-titled EP* • self-released • Featuring Jeff Caudill of Gameface on vocals, The Way Back offers up five tracks of heartfelt, sentimental, sincere tunes. It's not really rock; it's definitely not Gameface; and it's too good to simply be labelled pop. Jeff's vocals are fantastic while the music is laid back and comforting with simple drumbeats and creative guitar work.

The Weakerthans • *Watermark EP* • Sub City • Is there a singer in a punk band with a better voice than John Samson? I sure as hell don't think so; it's sentimental and sincere and completely honest. This CD is enhanced, offering a pretty neat video for "Watermark" from their *Left and Leaving* album. The two remaining tracks are unreleased live versions of "Illustrated Bible Stories for Children" and "The Last Last One". Both are recorded fantastically and offer a cool interpretation of songs you may have heard before and could never hear enough of.

This Busy Monster • *Fireworks* • Barsuk Records • The opening track reminds me of They Might Be Giants. The vocals are forceful, the music is progressive, moving forward and using strong melodies, but quirky all the time. And things continue at that pace, maybe not sounding like TMBG, but poppy, unusual and fun all the same. *Fireworks* is a creative piece of work, using various instruments (including saw, banjo, clarinet, cello and violin) and well-developed orchestration.

This Day Forward • *The Transient Effect of Light on Water* • Eulogy Records • Wow. OK. Interesting. This is hardcore and it's really tight hardcore with great guitar work and wicked breakdowns. The interesting part is the singer's tendency to alternate, almost one-for-one, screaming and singing. Some seriously deep lyrics, too. The thinking man's hardcore.

Thrice • *Identity Crisis* • Sub City • For an album that is over two years old, this is really amazing stuff. Thrice is from Southern California and this is a re-issue of their sold out first album (and only full-length release to date). This 12-track CD is heavy on harmonies and melody

blended together perfectly to balance the hardcore aggression of the music. Rapid-fire delivery, sing-a-long parts, swirling guitar work, chunky riffs, amazing tempo changes and infectious grooves push this album near the top of my current playlist. Man, I can't wait to hear what their new stuff sounds like. As with all Sub City releases, a portion of the proceeds from this album goes directly to charity.

Thug Murder • *The 13th Round* • Fat Wreck Chords • The press release for this CD describes Thug Murder as if "Shonen Knife were actually in Rancid." This is a pretty good description. The vocals are a bit throaty, and the choruses are somewhat melodic, even though I couldn't understand a word they were saying. Pump up your fists in the air and pick up *The 13th Round*.

Tiga • *Mixed Emotions: Montreal Mix Sessions, Vol. 5* • Turbo Records • For the fifth installment in the Montreal Mix Sessions series, Turbo Records label head Tiga took to the decks himself to deliver an astounding collection of continuously mixed House music. As with any mix CD worth its salt, tracks blend seamlessly, with the recognizable nonstop beat that has made House music so popular in clubs. Moods range the spectrum, from Andrew McLauchlan's happy "Love Story," with its Brazilian music samples, to DJ Hell's "Jack the House," where an evil voice chants the title of the track continuously. The real gem here, though, is the bonus CD that features nothing but retro Electro Funk. Handclaps and cheesy synthesizers rule the 22 tracks, with a few robot voices and sound effects that will have you pulling out your cardboard mats and your old copy of *Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo*.

Tinker Clay • *The As All Get Out EP* • Atta Boy Records • With a North Carolina power pop attitude, Tinker Clay storms onto the music scene. Hailing not from NC but Athens GA, they are comprised of three members that offer up fantastic female vocals, smart and poppy guitar work and uptempo drumming. This isn't a copycat Superchunk or Archers rip-off. Tinker Clay is definitely original, combining aspects of Superchunk power, Braid math rock and thick melodies.

Tom Daily • *The Burlington Northern* • Thick Records • Tom Daily is a musical genius. Daily plays nearly every instrument on this LP. There are some other musicians on various tracks, but the heart and soul of this recording is Tom Daily. Daily has other recordings, but this is my first taste. He reminds me of a crunchier version of Matthew Sweet. Like Sweet, Tom Daily infuses his LP with infectious pop hooks and wonderfully endearing lyrics. However, there are enough alt-rock asides to keep things interesting. You just can't help but love the tune "Your Walkman."

Tommy & The Terrors • *Mass. Hysteria* • Rodent Popsicle Records • Oi! Dammit I love this stuff! Punk you can really mosh to. No, it's punk that was MADE for moshing! Oi! Sick of commercial punk rock? Think you've heard some raw punk in your days? Think again and pick this up. You'll be converted in about three seconds.

Trust No One • *You've Been Warned* • Eulogy Records • I'm very picky about my hardcore. My personal collection of it is very small and selective: Biohazard, Madball, Sick of It All, and now, Trust No One. This is a very good disc full of just what you want when you want hardcore. This is unrelenting, serious stuff, right from the first chord to the last ringing in your ears. It is nice to say that these guys do not sound like anyone. They have forged an excellent sound for themselves which is original but still within the bounds of hardcore.

Tsunami Bomb • *The Invasion from Within EP* • Tomato Head Records • Lying somewhere between Punk, Gothic, Ska and Pop are Tsunami Bomb. The title track begins with an organ playing a macabre tune which suggests an evil presence. Soon

thereafter, Agent M's vocals come in, sounding like Belinda Carlisle doing her best Gwen Stefani impression. Rippling guitar riffs thunder behind the vocals while the bass and drums maintain the frenetic pace. "No Good Very Bad Day" is more of a Ska-Punk song, but without the horns, and a duet with a guy that sounds like Less Than Jake's Chris. "Lemonade" features highly melodic lyrics, with Agent M singing both vocal parts. Clocking in at just over 15 minutes, this regrettably short CD kept me glued to my seat.

TW Walsh • *Blue Laws* • Truckstop Records • TW Walsh plays almost every instrument on this CD, plus he sings on all the tracks. His songs do not rush the listener, but rather let you enjoy each note, letting them run their course. Therefore, the songs are pretty slow, probably not enjoyed by those with short attention spans. His singing sounds like he has been hurt emotionally, and his lyrics betray feelings of insecurity.

Unearth • *The Stings of Conscience* • Eulogy Records • You know how you'll see a CD cover and know immediately what the music is? Enter Unearth. The CD cover had "lethal hardcore" written all over it (not literally) and they paid in full. This is seriously intense hardcore with some phat-ass breakdowns. The music is really solid and clean, too. Great production value.

Various Artists • *2000 Black: The Good Good* • Planet E Records • Drum 'N Bass artist Dego (4 Hero) founded 2000 Black as a way to release music that he enjoys – even if those songs are on another label. The artists on *The Good Good* have released this material on the Planet E label, but Dego doesn't care about such technicalities. He picked his favorite tracks from the Planet E catalog and (with permission) compiled them onto this CD. The music takes on many forms, from the jazzy downtempo in Catalyst's "Sunnin," to the erratic beats and beautiful singing of Pavel Kostick and Guest's "Brand New Day." Seiji contributes a super funky bass line on "Into the Now," and Domu lends his Electro-tinged "Groovesome." The artists refer to this amalgamation of styles as Broken Beat, a form that includes, among other things, Deep Techno and Drum N Bass to make things interesting. This is a terrifically diverse CD, and sure to be enjoyed by fans of all types of Electronic music.

Various Artists • *A Punk Tribute to Metallica* • Cleopatra Records • It seems that every other day, a tribute album of some kind appears on IMPACT's doorstep. This time around, a bunch of Punk artists got together to record some of Metallica's best songs. Some of the bands include Sloppy Seconds, Agent Orange, Flipper, Dee Dee Ramone, Total Chaos and the Vibrators. The interesting thing about this tribute is that it features many songs from Metallica's seldom mentioned debut album, "Kill 'Em All," and has absolutely NO songs from any album past their self titled "black" album. I would get this album just for that reason alone.

Various Artists • *Boston Punk 2000* • Rodent Popsicle Records • Twenty-three, yes, 23, songs on here. Bands like Toxic Narcotic, The Profits, August Spies, Entropy, Dumpster Junkies and Downfall Fear. More punk than you can shake your mohawk at.

Various Artists • *How Many Lumps* • Binkis Records • This indie hip-hop label is as raw as it comes. You have to come to terms with the recording quality, but if you

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can get past that you'll get to experience some fun-as-hell hip-hop. Binkis, straight from the streets of Atlanta, is all about having a blast with a musical genre that's all about fun. Forget the guns, this compilation, featuring the likes of Jax, Flux and Mike Self, is droppin' smooth, sometimes jazzy, sometimes funky, bouncin' beats with skillful rhyme delivery.

Various Artists • *Live Fat, Die Young Vol. 5* • **Fat Wreck Chords** • Fat Wreck releases yet another compilation of songs by some of its artists. This time, it features unreleased tracks by 21 different artists, such as No Use for a Name, Anti Flag, Fabulous Disaster, Sick of it All, Strung Out, Less Than Jake, Propagandhi, Swingin' Utters and NOFX. Get your fill of melodic punk, ska-punk, hardcore punk!

Various Artists • *NYC Takeover Volumes 1 & 2* • **Victory Records** • This is live hardcore and punk. That's all you need to know. Volume One has four songs each from All Out War, Reach The Sky and Grey Area. Volume Two has four each from Skarhead, Buried Alive and River City Rebels. A crapload of music.

Various Artists • *Rodent Popsicle Records Sampler* • **Rodent Popsicle Records** • Here we have a sweet mix of old punk and serious thrash. I'm pretty sure that one of these bands, Toxic Narcotic, used to practice next to my band in The Music Complex in Boston. They have improved since the bad old days. This disc features five bands: Toxic Narcotic, The Unseen, A Global Threat, The Statistics, and A Poor Excuse. It's a good sampling of how well the Northeast rocks.

Various Artists • *Stay Tuned for the Holidays: A Crank! Sampler* • **Crank! Records** • *Stay Tuned for the Holidays...* covers six years of releases by artists on the Crank! Label. They picked one favorite track by each band and compiled them, 17 in all, for your listening pleasure. Crank up the volume on your stereo for the electric guitar-fest brought to you by Vitreous Humor, The Gloria Record, Errortype, Cursive, Fireside, Acrobat Down and Far Apart, plus many others. This is a high-octane collection of songs, so don't leave this laying around for small children to injure themselves.

Various Artists • *Terror Firmer Motion Picture Soundtrack* • **Go-Kart Records** • Terror Firmer is the latest movie from that last bastion of independent film, Troma Films. If you know any of the films by Troma, you know that the actual plot is immaterial. The only point is to show blood and breasts. So I won't bother telling you what the movie is about. I will tell you that the soundtrack features some of the best Punk bands around including, Less Than Jake, Sick of it All, Gwar, Entombed, NOFX, Rocket From the Crypt, and the Lunachicks singing the title track. Never mind if the movie is worth a shit, because the soundtrack is.

Various Artists • *That Darn Punk Original Soundtrack* • **Kung Fu Records** • That Darn Punk is Kung Fu Films latest flick, a straight to video release which is an actual movie, with plot lines and everything. To accompany the film, they released this soundtrack, which compiles tracks by Bigwig, Lagwagon, Ozma, Pennywise, The Ataris, Rancid and others. Check out the hilarious "Sigfried & Roy," by Nerf Herder, or the Vandals' cover of Celine Dion's "My Heart Will Go On." If the movie is as exiting as this soundtrack, it should do rather well!

Vending Machine • *The Chamber From Here to There* • **Powerbunny 4x4** • This is the second solo album from the guy behind the band BigAssTruck. At times it reminds me of Beck or Ween (maybe even King Missile). The vocals are somewhat quirky and the music is all over the place, fo-hi as hell. It's an album that can be both fun and annoying within the same track.

Volante • *45 Degrees North* • **Guilt Ridden Pop** • Volante is perfect for fans of emo, post punk and pop punk. Gabriel Shapiro's vocals come from the heart, and the dual guitar attack from Jeff and Jon Mitchell is aggressive. Josh Madson doesn't miss a beat, laying down the foundation with his drum kit. They are capable of all out rockers like "Seleccione Un Idioma," or more pensive and mellow tracks like "Watching Site Burn."

Volta Do Mar • *self-titled* • **Arborvitae Records** • This instrumental quartet features two bassists, one guitarist and one drummer. Like now defunct Math rock outfit Don Caballero, they like to pluck their instruments in beautiful and repetitive patterns that don't feature distortion. They are also fond of time and tempo changes. The only bad part about this CD is that it is only 17

minutes long!

Will Hoge • *Carousel* • **self-released** • Imagine, if you will, the musical equivalent of a tipsy Elvis Costello beating the shit out of that Counting Crows guy. Now you have a firm grasp on the sound of singer/songwriter Will Hoge.

Wise Monkey Orchestra • *They Live* • **Lauan Records** • Some bands have to be witnessed live to be able to be appreciated fully. The Wise Monkey Orchestra is one of these bands. For that reason, they decided to release *They Live*, recorded live at different gigs during the last year. Their music is pure funk, with plenty of jamming by the whole band. Alley's vocals sound a bit like Janis Joplin, full of confidence and feeling. The guitar solos go on for a while, trading licks with the horn section. I would suggest listening to this CD from beginning to end, so you can enjoy the vibe that comes from a Wise Monkey Orchestra concert.

Zerodown • *With a Lifetime to Pay* • **Fat Wreck** • Featuring former members of great bands such as Strung Out, Pulley, and Down By Law, this debut full-length has a very strong, uncompromising anti-establishment agenda and is a bit slower than most of today's punk rock. The band is thus able to concentrate more on harmonic and melodic flow, creating a dynamic, self-described "80's driving rhythm." Great addition to the Fat Wreck crew.

Vinyl releases

Adam West • *Piece of Ass/Iron Chain 7"* • **The Telegraph Company** • Take equal parts AC/DC, Cinderella and Monster Magnet and you have the Adam West. It's an odd combination, but once you hear them, you'll agree. These guys play rock, spelled R-A-W-K. Sleazy, rowdy, and damn good.

Dianogah • *self-titled 7"* • **Southern Records** • These two tracks were left over from the recording sessions for 2000's *Battle Champions*. Those familiar with Dianogah know that their unique sound is created with just one drummer and two bassists, with a remarkable sound as the result. "Hannibal" is a melancholic track which features a mid tempo beat and plenty of bass plucking. "A Bear Explains the Right and Wrong Ways to Put on a Shirt" is a bit faster and will probably be over with before you finish saying the song's title. This 7" should keep you busy until Dianogah visits your town.

Self-Made Monsters • *Give Me My Rabies Shot 7"* • **self-released** • SMM are five guys from North Carolina. But they do not have that typical NC sound. This is run-of-the-mill garage punk with mediocre lyrics. The recording quality does give it a good live feel.

The (International) Noise Conspiracy • *Time Bomb/Do U Know My Name? 7"* • **Carcrash Record Co.** • Featuring former members of Refused, The INC's ideas are far more radical than their music is able to convey; not to say they should stop making records. Music is the easiest way to propagate their ideas, and the inserts justify the records. "Time Bomb" features a steady groove and delivery similar to D.C.'s Make-Up, and "Do U Know My Name?" is a garage rocker.

The Beatings • *The Ballad of Jimmy and Jenny / Sex Beat 7"* • **The Telegraph Company** • The lead singer for this quartet sounds like a heavenly combination of Glenn Danzig and Jello Biafra. The backing music also borrows from both the Dead Kennedys as well as the Misfits. Throw in a couple of female backup singers singing "oh yeah" a couple of times and you've got yourself The Beatings.

The Lot Six • *The Hot Spot 7"* • **Espo Records** • Side A begins the assault and it continues on Side B. Full on rock with some emo aspects, great vocals and fantastic orchestration. The drumming is awesome, the guitar work is intricate and the bass lines are thick – these guys are dangerous. The question is, are you ready to rock? Here are three tracks that scream "YES!"

Winchester 73 • *Sein Wechselgeld Ist Blei (Arizona Terror) 7"* • **Scene Police** • This band used to be called IMPACT – so how could I say anything bad about them? The music is old school style, beer-infused punk rock the way it should be: fast, aggressive, melodic and packing a powerful punch. There are five tunes on this slab. Think DRI or Angry Samoans with a German attitude.

Label Addresses

(write these guys, tell 'em IMPACT sent ya)

- Alveran Records, PO Box 100152, 44701 Bochum/Germany
- American Pop Project, PO Box 2271, San Rafael, CA 94103
- Arborvitae Records, PO Box 857, Champaign, IL 61824
- Artemis Records, 130 5th Avenue, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10011
- Asian Man Records, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030-5585
- Atta Boy, c/o John Naismith, 678 Moreland Ave., #9, Atlanta GA 30306
- Badman Recording Co., 1388 Height #211, San Francisco, CA 94117
- Barsuk Records, PO Box 22546, Seattle, WA 98122
- Better Looking, 11041 Santa Monica Blvd., PMB 302, LA, CA 90025
- Big Wheel Recreation, 3506 Buford Highway, Apt. #F-4, Atlanta, GA 30329
- Black Cabaret Recs, PO Box 9805, North Hollywood, CA 91609-1809
- Burnt Toast Vinyl, PO Box 42188, Philadelphia, PA 19101
- BYO Records, PO Box 67464, Los Angeles, CA 90067
- Carcrash Record Company, PO Box 39, 4621 Vanersburg, Sweden
- Cleopatra Recs, 13428 Maxella Ave. #251, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292
- Compost Records, Haager Str. 10, 81671 München, Germany
- Crank! Records, 1223 Wilshire Blvd. #B23, Santa Monica, CA 90403
- Creep Records, suite 220, 252 E. Market St., West Chester PA 19381
- Daemon Records, PO Box 1207, Decatur, GA 30031
- Discord Records, 3819 Beecher St. NW, Washington, DC 20007
- Entartete Kunst Records, PO Box 411194, San Fran, CA 94141-1194
- Equal Vision Records, PO Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534
- Espo Records, P.O. Box 63, Allston, MA 02134
- Espresso Records, PO Box 4051, Charlottesville, VA 22903
- Eulogy Records, PO Box 8692, Coral Springs, FL 33075
- Fat Wreck Chords, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119-3690
- First World Music, PO Box 30932, Seattle, WA 98103
- FiveOne Music, PO Box 1868, Santa Monica, CA 90406-1868
- Fueled by Ramen Records, PO Box 12563, Gainesville, FL 32604
- Future Farmer Recordings, PO Box 22518, San Francisco, CA 94122
- Go-Kart Records, PO Box 20 Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012
- Good Looking, 84 Queens Road Watford Herts WD17 2LA UK
- Guilt Ridden Pop, 2217 Nicotil Ave. S. Minneapolis, MN 55404
- Headhunter Recs, 4901-906 Morena Blvd., San Diego, CA 92117-3432
- Hollydrift, PO Box 620552, Middleton, WI 53562-0552
- Honest Don's Records, PO Box 192027, San Francisco, CA 94119
- Hopeless Records, PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409
- III Legal Records, 72 Van Reipen Ave, PMB #280, Jersey City, NJ 07306
- Intelligent Records, 203 Washington St. #102, Salem, MA 01970-6500
- Jive Electro Records, 137-139 West 25th St., New York, NY 10001
- Johann's Face Records, PO Box 479164, Chicago, IL 60647
- Joi Veil, 720 Blvd. East Apt. 2E, Weehawken, NJ 07087
- Kung Fu Records, 920 N. Citrus Avenue, Hollywood, CA 90038
- Lauan Records, 2012 Spruce St. #3, Boulder, CO 80302
- Lookout! Records, PO Box 11374, Berkley, CA 94712-2374
- Mantra Recordings, 580 Broadway, Suite 1004, New York, NY 10012
- March Records, 51 Main Street, Hastings on Hudson, NY 10706
- Meteo! Records, 915 Cole Street #257, San Francisco, CA 94117
- Morphius Records, PO Box 13474, Baltimore, MD 21203
- Mr. Bongo Recordings, 2nd Floor, 24 Old Steine, Brighton, BN1 1EL
- Mr. Lady Records, PO Box 3189, Durham, NC 27715
- Mud Memory Records, 1654 Monroe St. NW, Washington, DC 20010
- New Discorder Records #24, 115 Bartlett Street, San Fran, CA 94110
- Ninja Tune Records, PO Box 4296, London, SE11 4XX, UK
- Nitro, 7071 Warner Ave. Ste. F PMB 736, Huntington Beach, CA 92647
- Now or Never Records, 61 Riordan Place, Shrewsbury, NJ 07702
- O.H.S., ohs_wookie@disinfo.net
- OHEV Records, PO Box 772121, Coral Springs, FL 33077
- OPE Entertainment, www.angelfire.com/on/ope
- Pink & Black Records, PO Box 190516, San Francisco, CA 94119
- Planet E Records, PO Box 27218, Detroit, MI 48227
- Polyvinyl Record Co., PO Box 1885, Danville, IL 61834-1885
- Post-Patio Records, PMB 49121, Austin, TX 78765
- Powerbunny 4x4, PO Box 381744, Cambridge, MA 02238-1744
- Record Cellar, PO Box 188, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004
- Rephlex Records, PO Box 2676, London, N11 1AZ, England
- Reptilian Records, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231
- Resin Records, PO Box 5601, Washington, DC 20016
- Revelation Records, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232
- Ribonucleic Records, 4149 SW 17th Place, Gainesville, FL 32607
- Roadrunner Records, 902 Broadway, New York, NY 10010
- Roden Popsicle Records, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134
- Saddle Creek, PO Box 8554, Omaha, NE 68101-0554
- Scene Police, c/o dpm, Humboldt Street, 53115 Bonn, Germany
- Schematic Music Co., 404 NE 35th Street Upstairs, Miami, FL 33137
- Self Made Monsters, PO Box 1122, China Grove, NC 28023
- Sessions Records, 15 Janis Way, Scotts Valley, CA 95066
- Shamra, 1-C Spray Terrace, Winfield, NJ 07036
- SideOne Dummy, 6201 Sunset Blvd., Suite 211, Hollywood, CA 90028
- Six Degrees Records, PO Box 411347, San Francisco, CA 94141-1347
- Slowdown Records, PO Box 414, Arlington, VA 22210
- SOAR Co., PO Box 8606, Albuquerque, NM 87198
- Soda Jerk, PO Box 4056, Boulder, CO 80306
- Southern Records, PO Box 57735, Chicago, IL 60657
- Splivey Cool Ent., 90 Atlantic Ave., Suite 4A, Brooklyn, NY 11201
- Sub City, PO Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409
- The Telegraph Company, 66 Hope Street, Brooklyn, NY 11211
- The Way Back, 745 Bennett Ave., Long Beach, CA 90804
- Their Old Stuff Is Better, 1401 Portland Ave. S. #C303, Minn. MN 55404
- Thick Records, 409 N. Wolcott Ave., Chicago, IL 60622
- TKO Records, 4104 24th Street #103, San Fran, CA 94114
- Tomato Head Records, PO Box 61298, Sunnyvale, CA 94088-1298
- Triple Crown, 331 West 57th Street, PMB 472, New York, NY 10019
- Truckstop Records, 2255 S. Michigan Ave. #4W, Chicago, IL 60616
- Trustkill Records, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724
- Try Again Records, 630 Plum Industrial Park, Pittsburgh, PA 15239
- Turbo Recordings, 3634 Boul. St. Laurent, Montreal, Canada H2X 2V4
- Vagrant Records, 2118 Wilshire Blvd. #361, Santa Monica, CA 90403
- Victory Records, PO Box 146546, Chicago, IL 60614
- What Are Records?, 2401 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80304
- Will Hoge, c/o Big Top, 315 King St., Ste. 205, Charleston, SC, 29401

Manatees: Extinction is a scar that never heals

By Sandra Diaz & Gregory Simpson

3276. This number represents the most recent count of manatees found off Florida's coasts. It is also the highest count since the manatee was placed on the Endangered Species List. This number should be a cause for celebration; unfortunately, it may spell disaster for the manatee.

Though manatee populations appear to be rising, so are manatee mortalities. Manatee deaths have doubled in the last ten years. Brevard County leads all other Florida counties in total and watercraft-related manatee deaths. Approximately 19% (184)

of all watercraft-related manatee mortalities in Florida were recovered from Brevard County waters from 1974-2000. Watercraft-related mortality accounted for 33% of all manatee mortalities in Brevard County, when a cause of death could be determined. Due to a manatee population viability analysis and population modeling study done in 1993, even a small increase in adult mortality would escalate the probability of extinction. Stronger regulations must be instituted now in order for manatees to survive beyond this point.

Right now, the Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) is holding a series of public workshops and hearings to gauge public reaction to stronger boating regulations and increased buffer

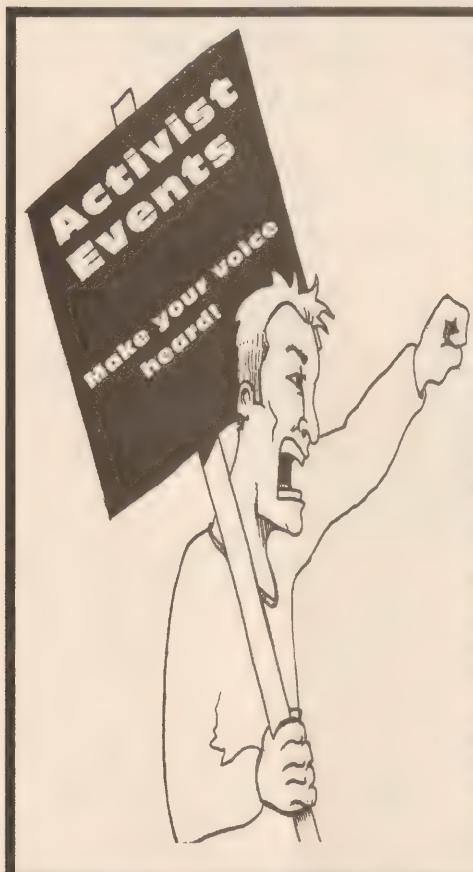
zones. Save the Manatee Club, who has done much of the research on the manatees, believes these recommendations will insure manatee survival. Other groups, such as Citizens for Florida's Waterways, feel that any enactment of these proposed regulations would limit their freedom to boat as fast as they please, wherever they please.

Floridians who are committed to protecting the manatees must speak up. The first public workshop was held in Brevard County on March 7th of this year. The staggering majority of people there to submit comments were boaters defending their "right to boat". Many were wearing buttons that touted "3276". That number should be taken in perspective. Compared to the 809,160 registered boats in Florida, that is 1 manatee to every 247 boats. Any attempt to weaken the current boating regulations is a manatee killed or injured needlessly by a boat. But every voice demanding stronger regulations is another manatee protected from scarring or death by watercraft.

The FWCC will be holding public hearings at the end of April and the beginning of May in Brevard County (date/time TBA). It is imperative that people attend those meetings to show support for the Florida manatee. The public voice must be heard over the din of such moneyed interests as marina owners, fat-cat developers, and careless, reckless boaters. The fate of the manatee is on the line and public activism is the only thing that can ensure its continued existence. If you are unable to attend these meetings, please write your comments to:

David K. Meehan, Chairman, FL Fish and Wildlife Cons. Comm.
620 South Meridian Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1600

For more information, please visit savethemanatee.org and wildlifeadvocacy.org



Solidarity Conference (w/ Howard Zinn, Jello Biafra and more)
When: April 6-8, 2001
Where: Penn State University Campus, State College, PA
Info: 814.237.9151

International Day of Action for Forests and Against Free Trade
When: April 19-20, 2001
Where: Various locations
Info: nfnena@sover.net www.nativeforest.org

Stop the FTAA & Corporate Globalization
When: April 20-22, 2001
Where: Quebec City
Info: www.stopftaa.org

Hemp Fest 2001
When: April 21, 2001, Noon-Midnight
Where: Edward Medard Park, Turkey Creek, FL
Info: houseoffunkus@yahoo.com/813.707.9194

MayDay 2001 - International Day of Action Against Capitalism
When: May 1, 2001
Where: Global
Info: www.mayday2001.org

Protest appearance of Lt. General Ronald Kadish, Dir., Ballistic Missile Defense Org.
When: May 3, 2001
Where: Radisson, Cape Canaveral, FL
Info: www.space4peace.org

Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space International Membership Conference
When: May 4-6, 2001
Where: Leeds, England
Info: www.space4peace.org

Voter Rights March
When: May 19, 2001
Where: Washington D.C.
Info: www.VoterMarch.org

National Conference on Gender
When: May 18-20, 2001
Where: Washington Court Hotel, D.C.
Info: www.gpac.org

National Conference on Race & Ethnicity in American Higher Education
When: May 31-June 3, 2001
Where: Seattle, WA
Info: 405.292.4172 or www.occe.ou.edu/NCORE/

Demonstration against the World Bank conference
When: June 24, 2001
Where: Barcelona (Catalunya, SPAIN)
Info: www.pangea.org/mrg

Animal Rights 2001
When: June 30- July 5, 2001
Where: Washington, DC
Info: www.animalrights2001.org

Vegetarian Summerfest
When: July 11-15, 2001
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Info: 518.568.7970 or nabs@telenet.net

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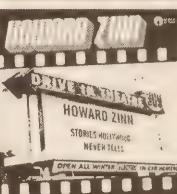


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Sticking to Your Guns or How I Love Drinking Tea From the Pitcher

By Adam Finley
art by Marty Kelley

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET MY BRAIN AROUND EMINEM, and I can't seem to do it. I hear his music, I listen to him rap, and I find myself completely overwhelmed with indifference, if in fact that's something you can be overwhelmed with.

People say his music is offensive to gays and women. If a gay, woman, or gay woman were offended by what Eminem says, then I would definitely give that merit, because if Eminem were to say, release an album in which he mocked my lifestyle, I wouldn't be too happy about it:

Adam drinks iced tea from the pitcher
Cause he's too lazy to wash a glass
Yeah!

The point of this article really has nothing to do with Eminem because, frankly, I don't really care about him, and I can't denounce what he does because it has zero effect on my non-dish washing lifestyle. I do, however, see a parallel between Eminem and myself.

I write reviews for an e-publishing company. This sounds fancy, but really I just make up goofy stuff and try to mention the product before the end of the review. While my sense of humor is always nonsensical, I don't think of myself as being above everyone else, or having a humorous gift that only a select few can grasp. That seems to be the case, though, sometimes.

I get about ten emails a week from people who don't "get" what I'm saying. When I wrote in one review that Beethoven died 2000 years ago, I was making fun of myself by pointing out I had no clue when Beethoven died.

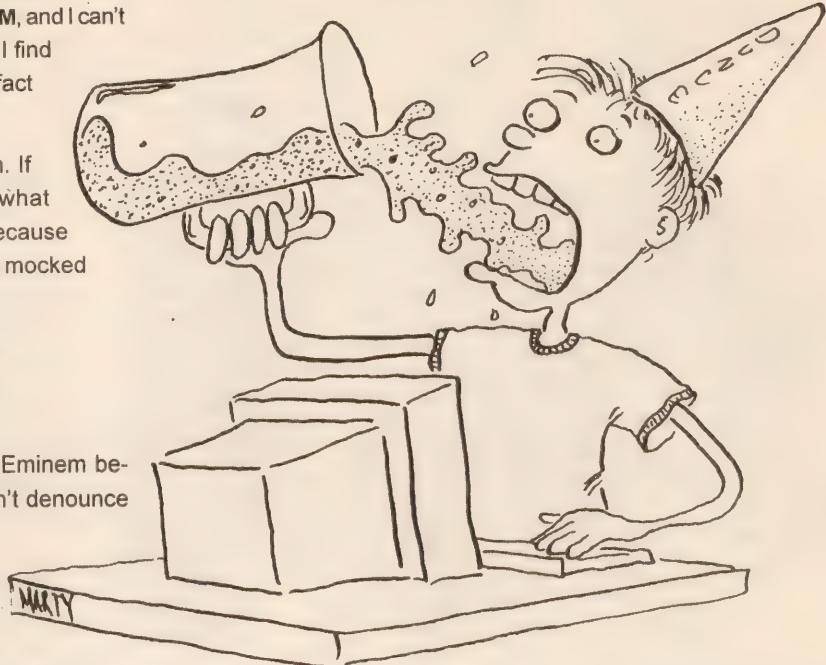
The next day, six people wrote and told me the exact date of Beethoven's death. One person even told me it was a stupid mistake.

My reaction was twofold: I was amused that they didn't know I was making a joke, and slightly bothered by the fact that some people believed I thought Beethoven was born over 2000 years ago.

Rather than write to everyone and try to explain myself, I filled the entire next issue with "factoids" about Beethoven, complete with made-up quotes and a snippet about this great pianist inventing the sand wedge.

That was my response, but it made me wonder what would have happened had other, more important people taken advice from every yahoo that ventured an opinion:

Martin Luther King: I have a dream...



Man in crowd: You had a dream?

MLK: No, I said I HAVE a dream.

Man: So you didn't actually have a dream.

MLK: No, it's a figure of speech. I mean I have a hope for the future.

Man: Well, you should probably just say that so we know what you mean.

MLK: I'm the leader of the civil rights movement. I think I know how to deliver a speech.

Man: Well don't come crying to me when everybody keeps asking you what this "dream" is all about.

You put your head down, do what you know how to do, and accept the fact that some folks will get it and others won't. Martin Luther King knew it, Eminem knows it, Oscar Wilde knew it, Gandhi knew it, Hunter S. Thompson knows it, and John Lennon knew it. Anyone who has done anything worthwhile with his/her talent, at whatever magnitude, knows this.

So whether or not Eminem is a misogynistic, homophobic hate monger is for you to decide. But you've got to respect a guy who sticks to his guns. I'm sure Beethoven would agree, if he hadn't been trampled by a horse all those years ago. ¶

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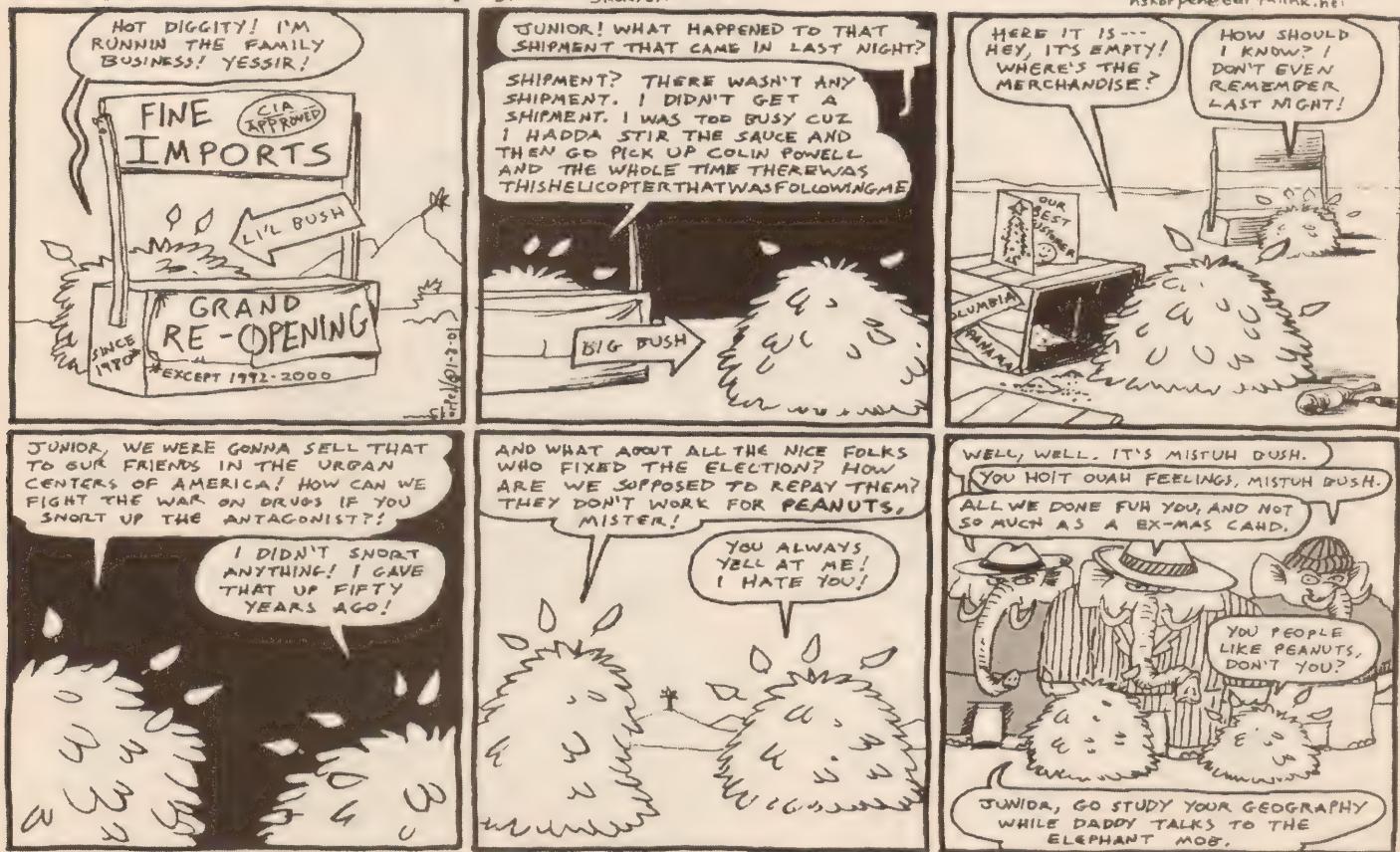
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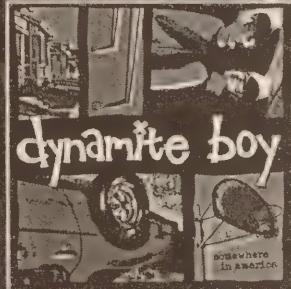
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Seeking Equality in American Education

By David Lucander

The current bipartisan push for educational accountability through standardized tests claims that it will eliminate inequalities in the education system by having the same standards applied to all students. However, it will actually widen the educational gap between the rich and poor, and because race is intimately connected with class, it will deepen the racial divide of educational equality between racial minorities and Caucasians. While legislation which requires the successful completion of a standardized high school exit exam may have the best interest of the nation at hand because it demands an educated populace, it fails to recognize that individuals have unique learning styles, abilities, and strengths.

High-stakes testing in the form of exit exams is, in some ways, comparable to the SAT for college entrance. They both feature an Euro-centric framework that discounts the cultural influence and experience of anyone who is not middle or upper class and from a European cultural background. This does not mean that *all* Blacks, Latinos, or Asians will have difficulty with the exam and it also does not mean that all suburban Whites will breeze through it. It does mean that students from low income or minority groups are more likely to have difficulty passing the exams.

The alleged benefits of these exams are that they will provide the nation with a constant supply of highly educated citizens every graduation day, they will raise the educational standards for low-achieving school districts, and they assure that everyone who graduates high school will have a common knowledge base. While a high-stakes exit examination surely does increase standards for some schools, it sets these standards without providing a method or funding for low-achieving schools to attain these standards.

This is like making a competent, beer-league softball player step in the batter's box against All-Star pitcher Pedro Martinez without any training. In Massachusetts, the town of Longmeadow borders the city of Springfield, yet for every \$6,000 Springfield receives per pupil, Longmeadow receives \$11,000. With a disparate gap in income, how can we hold Springfield's students to the same level as Longmeadow when Springfield is forced to function with older textbooks, buildings, and has less money for much-needed professional development?

The answer is funding. On average, the local government, through property taxes, pays for about 60% of the schools' operations. State government contributes about 30% and the federal government kicks in just under 10%. For the federal government to demand higher student performance while only paying for 10% of the school's operation is absurd. The same goes for the state gov-



ernment. Funding from state and federal governments should be used to minimize the inequalities set up by the property tax funding base. If this were to happen, maybe then we could at least talk about standardized tests being fair.

The bulk of localized funding for school districts comes from property taxes. High-income families tend to live in expensive houses and therefore pay more in property taxes. Low income families often rent tenements and therefore do not own property or contribute much to the local property tax base, creating a shallower pool of funding for the schools within that district. A possible solution to this problem is to consolidate all of the state's property taxes and then equally distribute the money to all of the school districts on a per-pupil basis. While the rich would be losing out on the funding used for their brand new textbooks and advanced art courses, the poor and working class (the majority of the population) would finally be able to purchase history texts made after the Carter administration or recruit top of the line teachers. If all men are truly created equal, one of the founding philosophies of this great nation, why is it that not all men have an equal chance to educate themselves? For this ideal to be reached, we must equalize the available resources of all school districts.

Standardized tests require a standardized curriculum so that, ideally, everybody has an equal opportunity to pass the exam and no one is being tested on something he or she may have not been taught in class. Standardized tests require that specific subject fields and topics be studied by all students, but because the school year is limited, the teacher and class are robbed of the mobility to

Social studies are more effective when they can be applied to the student's daily life. Government courses can teach the *Bill of Rights* and connect that to the fundamental right to resist search and seizure or debate the legality of the war on drugs. History can show how women mobilized the home front and stepped up the wartime economy during WWII. Literature can use Toni Morrison's novels to show the personal effects of racism. Because of the countless avenues that humanities courses can take, it is harmful to standardize their content.

We must keep in mind that although Napoleon Bonaparte valued education and created a national school system throughout France, he also controlled the curriculum and used this to foster unquestioning national allegiance without critical examination of what was being taught.

More equitable schools would help America grow through advancing the democratic ideals of respecting individual differences and other perspectives while teaching critical examination skills.

Some students tend to perform exceptionally well on standardized examinations, while others do well on oral reports. A multiple assessment portfolio approach recognizes that all learners have their own individualistic learning preferences by assessing their competence not only at reading and writing but also logical reasoning, the ability to function in group work, leadership qualities, and oral participation. This method permits room for standardized tests yet allows other methods of assessment to have value, leading to a more complete assessment of the student's ability, not only as a pupil but also to function in today's complex world.

We must keep in mind that, like racism, there is no single cure-all for educational problems. These issues run deep through the thread of American culture and become magnified in our school systems.

cover certain topics in depth. This holds especially true for the humanities. While math and science courses may benefit from having a basic set of rudimentary knowledge and skills required of all students, this can not be extended to subjects in the humanities. These subjects have too many interpretations and are far too diverse to force one standard thought process. While "two plus two" will always equal four and the water cycle remains, there are countless perspectives to take with history, government, and literature. Courses in the humanities are a reflection of our culture and individual pupils have their own unique cultural interpretations. Do we want our students cramming for a test of rote memorization or do we want them to be able to practically apply the skills that they learn in school?

weren't, there would be no need for debate about educational issues.

We must keep in mind that, like racism, there is no single cure-all for educational problems. These issues run deep through the thread of American culture and become magnified in our school systems. We must look at family structures and parental involvement, cultural definitions of what it means to be educated, bilingualism, school funding, teacher training and certification, graduation requirements, and, in the case of education, change from within the system. The educational ship has some holes but it is nowhere near time to bail out. ■■

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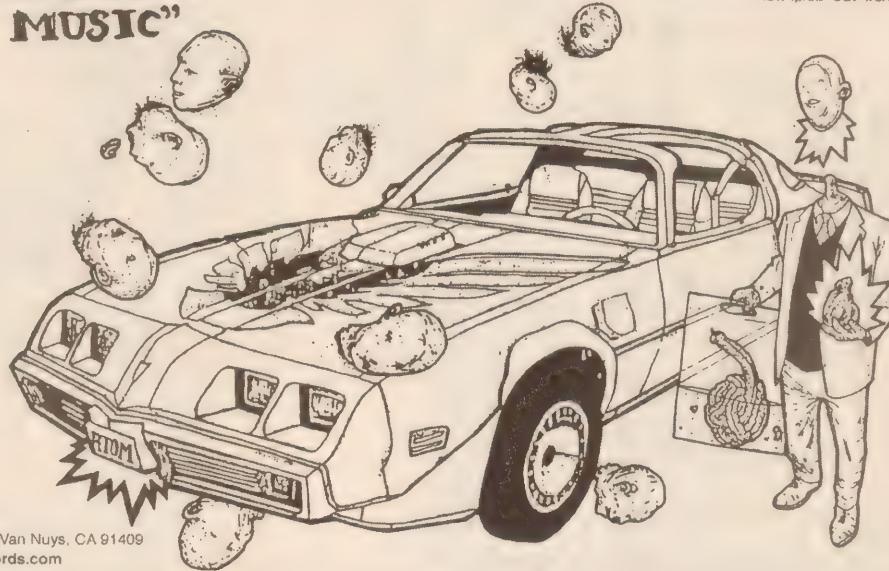


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The Cost of Information

(INFO, continued from page 8)

certain kinds of information—like autopsy photos. I have mixed feelings about that.

On the one hand, I can't approve of any law that restricts the freedom of the press. On the other hand, I doubt that the newspaper wants the photos for any reason other than greed; people will buy the papers that contain the stories that come about, advertisers will spend more, and the story will go out over the AP wire and make them even more money. As adamantly pro-first-amendment as I am, I'd have a hard time supporting the rights of an over-funded, over-powerful capitalistic newspaper to exploit a tragedy like this for no other reason than to further stuff its corporate coffers.

Perhaps in simpler times, when a community newspaper was truly a part of its community, its editors would have had the grace to forego the exploitation of autopsy photos in the interests of good taste and consideration of the family. However, many of today's large and powerful papers are just part of a giant corporate conglomerate; the hometown newspaper may soon be replaced by information-distributors that resemble home-improvement mega-stores and chain supermarkets.

I suppose, then, that as this happens, we can expect regulations like this when we permit information to become a commodity to be bought and sold like so many pork bellies. KK

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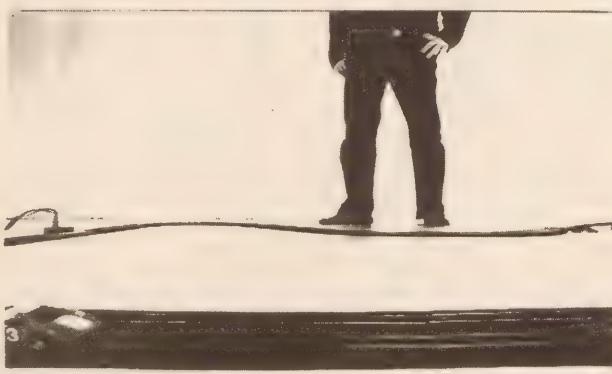
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Seeking the True Falun Gong

(FALUN GONG, continued from page 17)

men patrolling Tiananmen Square carrying fire extinguishers. How come they all showed up today? The location of the incident is at least 20 minutes roundtrip from the nearest building - the People's Great Hall. If they were to have dashed over there to get the equipment, it would have been too late." Is it even possible that the police could have responded with not one but four fire extinguishers within the space of a minute if they didn't have prior knowledge that this was going to occur?

Falun Gong continue in their press release: "In terms of response time, another foreign journalist in Beijing expressed shock that Xinhua was able to release the first report on the incident almost immediately and in English, no less. Every Chinese citizen knows that every report from Xinhua usually has to first go through several rounds of approval by higher-ups and is generally 'old news' by the time it is published. Moreover, state-run media have never released any photos or video of Falun Gong protests in the course of 18 months of persecution to the foreign press, so why now and with so little hesitation? And why only in English and not in Chinese?"

The issue was raised with me again and again during a recent four-city tour where I spoke about my new book on Falun Gong. Some people told me Falun Gong must be crazy if it does crazy things. When I challenged the assumption that we in fact know all the details, eyes glazed over. Perhaps that's because once people hear "facts" that seem to confirm their own assumptions; they don't want to hear more, even if the original "facts" may be wrong or misleading.

Hot images sear themselves into the brain; retractions and clarifications rarely do. In the newly published Tiananmen Papers, on how the Communist Party handled the student protests in 1989, journalist Orville Schell, Dean of the Journalism School at Berkeley, discusses the many forgeries and falsehoods the Chinese government and others have concocted and circulated over the years. Misinformation is the tradecraft of intelligence agencies in many countries, especially China. It is not surprising that Beijing is denouncing these new documents as fake. Clearly, their publication is embarrassing to the secretive rulers of China, especially President Jiang Zemin, whose hard-line role in those events has been revived in the official persecution of Falun Gong.

Where Are The Skeptics?

Why did the deeply ingrained, institutionalized skepticism of our own media crumble so quickly in the face of what smells like a stage-managed incident that's being blatantly exploited for political reasons? Why would so many American news outlets be so gullible? Is it because the whiff of spirituality and mysticism in a culture few of us understand makes some of us uncomfortable in our journalistic practice?

In my investigation into Falun Gong, I document a disturbing pattern of U.S. media outlets echoing China's charges, including the frequent use of pejorative words like "cult" and "sect" and even "mishmash." In some respects, the media in our own country also

reflects a one-dimensional, stereotyped perspective, downplaying and denigrating a force that doesn't fit into simple left-right political categories. They may have trouble relating to it because of its Asian character and roots in a mix of a Buddhist cultivation practice, Taoism and traditional Qigong. Falun Gong is too often treated like the classic "other," too weird to be taken seriously or show sympathy toward. (Incidentally, I am not a Falun Gong practitioner, but our company has produced videos for Falun Gong, which gave me access and information that I used to write and produce a film and a book on the subject.)

At one of my bookstore appearances in Chicago, someone compared Falun Gong and the current situation in China to David Koresh's Branch Davidians and the 51-day siege in 1993 by federal law enforcement officers in Waco, Texas, ostensibly to seize guns and protect children from abuse. This is a comparison China has also invoked to make the case that it's only doing what the U.S. government did in combating its own dangerous cult. Someone jumped up to challenge the analogy, arguing that Koresh and company were violent and Falun Gong is not. He was right: There is no direct comparison, except in terms of the response to what happened. Only the hard right-wing Americans criticized the government's brutal military intervention, reminding me of the words of that American lieutenant in Vietnam: "We destroyed the village in order to save it."

The lack of empathy people felt for the families under Koresh's mad control led to many rationalizing or not speaking out against the bloody and illegal suppression that occurred in Waco. Once people are dehumanized in our eyes, we may lose compassion for them and turn the other way when their rights are violated, especially if we dislike their politics and consider them unsympathetic victims. If you want to know the details of where dehumanization leads in China, check out Amnesty International's recent report on the pervasive use of torture, which is often directed at non-violent Falun Gong practitioners. Beijing, naturally, calls that a forgery, too.

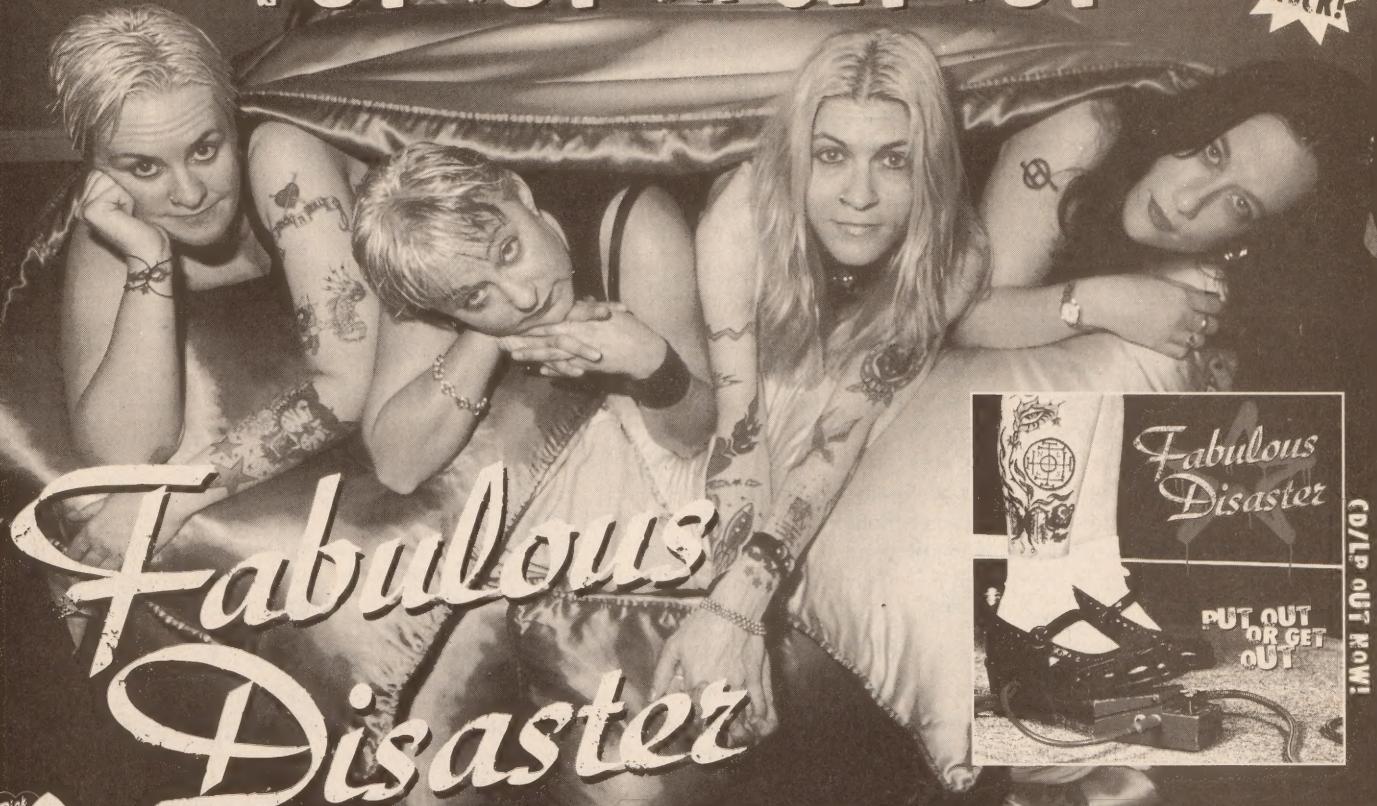
On February 17, more than a thousand Falun Gong practitioners protested nonviolently in Los Angeles against the persecution going on in China. Few media outlets showed up at their press conference, even though this is a story making headlines worldwide. (I couldn't find any story about it the next day in The Los Angeles Times, although a book review they published carried a discussion of what happened in Tiananmen Square in 1989.) Media indifference fans public indifference. China's media is doing what one would expect, but how does one explain the attitude of the Western media, which has covered the story so episodically?

In light of the prominent media play this "mass suicide" story received, it is not too late to thoroughly investigate not only what happened but whether and why we were all taken in. ■

Danny Schechter, executive editor of MediaChannel.org, is the author of "Falun Gong's Challenge to China: Spiritual Practice or 'Evil Cult'" (Akashic Books, 2000) He also directed a documentary of the same name. Parts of this column were originally submitted as an Op-Ed piece at the request of *The Washington Post*, which did not print it.

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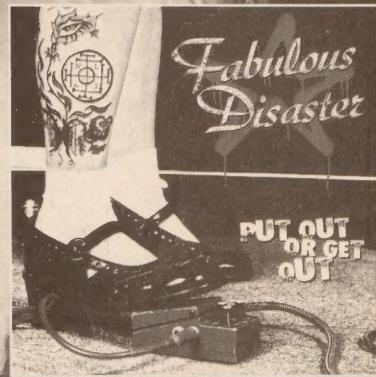
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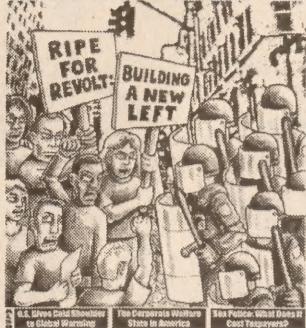


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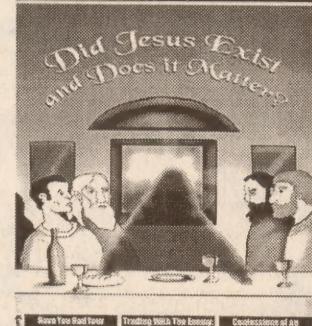
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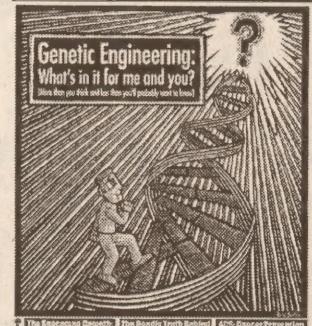
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